BELIEF AND ACTION

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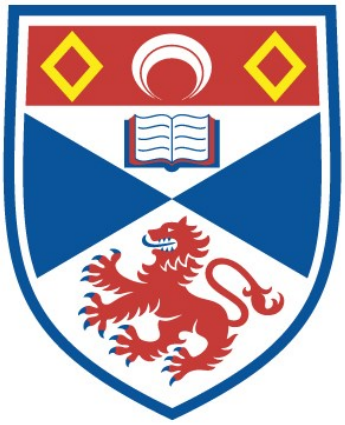

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS "BELIEF AND ACTION" JUNE 1976

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The role of "believes" is identified by finding a unique and unparaphraseable use of the term that is integral to the structure of important forms of language. This role can only be roughly indicated here. Roughly,"believes" identifies someone's reasons for doing or thinking something or what he counts as success in certain activities,without committing the speaker to accepting them; and so it allows the possibility of mistake.

Standard objections to dispositional accounts are reviewed and found unconvincing. The central difficulty is found to be that dispositional accounts give no satisfactory explanation of the fact that it is (part of) an explanation of action to cite the agent's beliefs. It is argued that causal accounts have the same deficiency,that the role or point of "believes" in language is not satisfactorily explained. It is concluded that neglect of this central question vitiates eventhe real strengths of these accounts. The relation between different questions about belief is explored, and analogous questions about other cases,especially artefacts,are considered.

Explanations of actions are discussed to bring out the role of "believes." This appears in explaining the relation between the "point or purpose" of an action and the actions of which it consists at a lower level of description. "Believes" identifies what governs this relation while allowing the possibility of mistake.

Ryle's claims about thinking are considered,and an interpretation of the notion of an adverbial verb is suggested. The central difficulty concerns the cases of the thinking of le Penseur or of Euclid. Although it seems important that we should be able to say what the constituents of thinking are here,we cannot do so,since the relevant vocabulary is not adapted to giving the constituents of anything. These activities have their

own "objects" as well as their own criteria of success. Activities,"objects," and criteria of success are bound up together,and do not connect in any simple way with the vocabulary that we try to connect them with in asking what their constituents are. This is far from unique. Music provides another relevant example.

The last chapters examine various contexts in which "believes" is important. Topics considered are reasons,evaluations,assertions, belief and the will,intentionality,and speech-act accounts. In each case particular doctrines are critically examined.

Statement and declaration by the candidate.

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance General No. 12 in October 1968, and enrolled under the Ph.D. resolution on 28 June 1971.

I matriculated as a full-time research student in the Department of Logic & Metaphysics of the University of St. Andrews in October in each of the academic years from October 1968 to September 1971. Thereafter I matriculated as a part-time research student in the same department each academic year until the present.

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree.

(sgd) Claud W.P. Pehrson.

Statement by supervisor.

I hereby certify that Claud W.P. Pehrson was admitted under Ordinance General No. 12 in October 1968 and enrolled under the Ph.D. resolution on 28 June 1971. He has been engaged upon research work under my supervision and has fulfilled the conditions of the resolution and he is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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BELIEF AND ACTION

Introduction

Those theories of mind that assume what is called a 'dualist' position have been devastatingly attacked by many philosophers recently, with Ryle and Wittgenstein in the lead. Behaviourism was a popular replacement. But this doctrine or approach has withered too. The fundamental difficulty has been that it is not possible to find a statement of the doctrine that is weak enough to be acceptable without the verification principle of meaning.

Neither Ryle nor Wittgenstein claim to be behaviourists. Indeed, both attack behaviourism. Certainly, their general positions seem to be independent of behaviourism. They neither stand with it nor fall with it. Nonetheless, Ryle at least accepted that belief is a disposition to behave.

In "The Concept of Mind," he says:-

"In describing the workings of a person's mind, we are not describing a second set of shadowy operations. We are describing certain phases of his one career. Namely, we are describing the ways in which certain parts of his conduct are managed. The sense in which we explain his actions is not that we infer to occult causes, but that we subsume them under hypothetical and semi-hypothetical propositions."

Much of this I accept. What I do not accept is that "The sense in which we explain his actions.....is that we subsume them under hypothetical and semi-hypothetical propositions." This does not seem to me to be true, and particularly not true in the case of belief statements. Certain of the ways in which we explain actions need a more complicated conceptual frame-work than Ryle allows here. And this framework is the key to understanding belief in philosophy. Beliefs explain actions; and this point is not adequately accounted for by Ryle, nor by the traditional accounts of belief; yet it

is the key.

Ryle's turning to hypothetical and semi-hypothetical propositions is strongly reminiscent of behaviourist writing. Indeed, it may seem the only alternative to the occult causes of the demonology. Since I do not accept these demons, I must find a third possibility. But I shall not present a full case against the traditional demons. That debate has, I believe, been pretty well thrashed out. But I shall have something to say about the idea that we explain a man's actions by referring to non-occult causes of them and a good deal to say about behaviourism. But I shall not attempt to consider either as a general theory of the mind, only as they apply to belief.

Of course, I am not alone in finding difficulties in the idea that beliefs are dispositions to act, or are "like habits." P.T. Geach in "Mental Acts," R. Chisholm in "Sentences about believing," and W. Dray in "Laws and Explanation in History" are examples. But these dissidents tend to approach the problem as if it were to be resolved by 'analyzing' belief in ways that are more consonant with traditional theories about belief. These can be characterized as "Occurrence Theories," since they explain what belief is by appeal to some occurrence 'in the mind.' Answers to philosophical questions do develop along lines that fit in with the methodological ideas of the time. Traditional answers were given in the context of traditional ideas about philosophy, about meaning, and about metaphysics. We are no longer bound by the idea that there must be something - event, state, property or object - for every word to stand for or designate or describe. We have escaped from the limited and limiting insistence that truth-conditions are the be-all and end-all of philosophy. So perhaps these traditional ideas can be reconsidered, and we may talk of

entertaining and accepting propositions without repressing a fastidious shudder.

Yet these notions cannot satisfy us. We offer statements about what a man believes in order to explain what he does. Why? Why should it count as an explanation? What illumination do belief statements throw on actions? Why should a man's actions count as evidence for or against statements about what he believes? These questions cannot be answered in the traditional terms for discussing belief; indeed they are not even asked clearly. Even if an analysis of belief could be produced in these terms, my questions would not be answered. And we may well wonder what has been gained. I shall argue that even if the analysis does refer to dispositions to behave, it still does not answer my questions satisfactorily. This is the fundamental inadequacy in the account.

I do not attempt to say what the nature, ultimate or otherwise, of belief is; nor have I attempted to carry out any of the latter-day versions of this project. I produce no definitions, analyses or maps. Nor have I attempted to characterize the concept of belief, or provide truth-conditions or criteria for applying the word. My aim is to show "how the word works" as an explanation and to show the context in which it works. My claim is that both traditional and behaviourist accounts are inadequate because they do not do this, and cannot do it.

So it is clear that my approach is in sympathy with the approach of those who adopt the slogan "Don't look for the meaning, look for the use." I will not indulge in any extended discussion of these ideas. But there are two corollaries that I would like to draw out. The first is that there is no reason to expect that anything in the way of a definition or analysis will emerge from my

discussion. But that is obvious enough.

But the second is not so obvious, nor even so orthodox. It is that the search for a definition or analysis is almost certain to go wrong. This comes out when we take the oft-drawn analogy between words and tools a little further. For the attempt to say what 'x' is, in philosophy at least, amounts to an attempt to find a synonymous expression. That comes to finding another way or ways of doing the same job as is done by the word under investigation. If we want to know what the job is, this is unlikely to be very illuminating, although it may be helpful together with other explanations. The analogy between words and tools, or between language and a tool-box allows us to explain why. One does not expect to find tools duplicated in a tool-kit. One may find without surprise that it has several screw-drivers of different shapes and sizes, or that three or four spanners can be used on a given size of nut. But these apparent duplications will not be mere replications. We can expect to find circumstances under which only one tool will do the job properly; some screws can only be undone with a short-handled screw-driver; the nut that holds on a bath tap can only be undone with that particular spanner. In a well-thought-out tool-kit, nothing is superfluous, and everything has its own essential job. We might find two instruments with exactly the same job, but we cannot expect to. And if we consider not particular tool-kits, but the whole range of different types of tool from which particular kits are a selection, the point is even clearer. Each type has been formed with a function or a range of functions in mind; one does not make a different kind of fastening for fun or for mere variety, but so as to do a particular job better in some respect than existing fastenings.

The claim that words or phrases have exactly the

same use should be regarded with suspicion. If in a given context it is true, then that is reason to suppose that one of them is not really at home, is not doing its own special job. The same is true in the case of tools. Of course, it is always possible that this clue will fail us, that we do have a duplication of words or phrases. But we should not expect this. In any case, it is my claim that "believe" has just such a unique use as I suppose; and it is important and revealing. We find it in the context of explaining actions. Hence the approach of this thesis, through an examination of belief and action.

The idea that in philosophy one should explain the uses of words is, so far, ambiguously phrased. Explaining the use of something may involve explaining how to use it or, explaining what it is used to do. Giving the criteria for applying words correctly answers the first question, but not the second. Suppose someone asks what a goal is. We could explain how and when the word is to be used, citing the relevant rules of the game. If the questioner grasps the answer, he will correctly be able to say when a goal has been scored. But he would not know what the consequences of scoring a goal were, and so would not know what the point of scoring goals is. Could he be said to know what a goal is? Only in a weak sense, if at all. Our questioner needs to know, not only when he may correctly say "That's a goal," but also what the point of goals is. And these two questions are independent of each other. Clearly one may know the point of scoring a goal, but not when one may correctly say "Goal!" - as when one is not familiar with a particular game. And equally someone might be able to say when a goal has been scored, without knowing what the consequences within the game of scoring a goal are.

A point that is very similar to mine is made by

Toulmin in "Uses of Argument," when he distinguishes between the truth-conditions and the force of certain modal terms:-

"The meaning of a modal term, such as 'cannot,' has two aspects; these can be referred to as the force of the term and criteria for its use. By the 'force' of a modal term I mean the practical implications of its use; the force of the term 'cannot' includes, for instance, the implied general injunction that something-or-other has to be ruled out in this-or-that-way and for such-a-reason. This force can be contrasted with the criteria, standards, grounds and reasons, by reference to which we decide in any context that the use of a particular modal term is appropriate. We are entitled to say that some possibility has to be ruled out only if we can produce grounds or reasons to justify this claim and under the term 'criteria' can be included the many sorts of things we have then to produce. We say, for instance, that something is physically, mathematically, or physiologically impossible, that it is terminologically or linguistically out of order, or else morally or judicially improper; it is to be ruled out, accordingly, qua something or other. And when we start explaining 'qua what' any particular thing is to be ruled out, we show what criteria we are appealing to in this particular situation." (P.30, Essay I, under "Force and Criteria.")

Toulmin is talking about modal terms, but I apply the distinction much more generally, and so I talk of the point of using a word.

Austin's scheme of illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary speech-acts reveals some similar concerns. We can discern a distinction between the conditions of appropriateness of a speech-act, the conditions that have to be kept if "infelicity" is to be avoided, and the effects or consequences of the speech-act, the point of performing it. And there are finer distinctions that could be drawn within this frame-work.

There is another kind of question that may be asked, and that needs to be disentangled. Suppose someone asks what a sextant is. We might first set out to answer by describing the object, showing pictures, producing an example of a sextant. This would

enable the questioner to identify (and re-identify) sextants, and distinguish sextants from arm-chairs and compasses. And we can often say that someone who has these abilities knows what something is. But does this really amount to knowing what a sextant is? In a weak sense, Yes. A nurse knowing this much about the instruments could correctly hand to the surgeon what he needed when he asked for it. But in a stronger sense, no. For he cannot use the sextant. So we could teach our questioner how to take a sight. But even this would not be enough. To complete the answer, we have to explain the point of taking sights; we have to set the instrument in its context of the science of astro-navigation, and of surveying and map-making. These second two stages of explanation amount to explaining the point, use or purpose of sextants, in two rather different stages. But there is yet another explanation that may be demanded. This is roughly an explanation of what sextants are made up of, what they consist of, or how they work. Being able to identify and use something is compatible with not knowing what it consists of, how it is made. All of us use gadgets and equipment without knowing much about their insides. Of course, there is an indefinite amount to be known about any given object. But we do sometimes say "I don't know what it is" even when we can identify it and understand what to do with it. It oftens happens that we enjoy food, for example, but don't know what it is. If we find out that it is octopus or sweetbreads, we may be put off, so the answer to this question can make a difference.

This has considerable relevance to philosophy. One of the things that I shall be concerned to argue is that the different philosophical accounts of belief - or at least the different kinds of philosophical account - are concerned to answer rather

different questions. If we can get straight the question that each theory is answering, we can see what is right about them, as well as what is wrong with them. Questions like "What is belief?" or "What is the nature of belief?" or "What is the analysis of belief?" or "What are the correct conditions for applying 'believes'?" or even "How can we characterize the concept of belief?" are too vague without explanation, and often far too restrictive when they have been explained.

There is one other matter that is worth discussing briefly. It sometimes happens that discussion of a word reveals that there is more than one legitimate way of using it. It is then that we begin to feel the need to select one of these uses as in some way particularly important to philosophy. Then we begin to talk of the "logically primary" use of a word, or of the "paradigm" or "core" of the word, or of its "logical origin." The difficulty is that there does not seem to be any very clear-cut criterion for making this choice in any of these terms.

Being "primary" has nothing to do with being first in time, but with being most important for philosophy. It is sometimes taken to be related to the way in which the relevant concepts must be learned. But this is not a question that can be settled by observing people and children learning languages. Questions of this kind, about how some use of a word could be learned, may be important. But it is very far from clear that answering such questions will answer all, or even many, philosophical questions. For example, we may agree that the number words must be learned by learning to recite them in the appropriate sequence, and (what is not the same thing) learning to count. But this does not do anything to resolve philosophical problems about numbers. These considerations

have a use, though a limited one. For it is clearly true that any philosophical theory that does not allow for the learning of numbers, or that makes it impossible to learn the numbers, must be wrong.

The notion of "logical origin" is also peculiar. We may receive hints, but we do not receive answers, from etymology about philosophy. I think that there is a useful notion to be found here, though. And it links with my earlier claim that in attempting to reach philosophical understanding of something we should look for a use of the word or words that is unique, that cannot be carried out by any other words or phrases. We may, in considering the concept or word that interests us, identify conceptual pressures in the language such that, if the word did not exist, we would have to invent it. If we imagine that we have a language without some word, we may find that the gap can be got round, without losing anything of importance. But we may find that, without that word, a whole way of talking becomes impossible.

For example, some colour-words are not essential; we can, I suppose, get by without "turquoise", "heliotrope", or "puce". But could we get by without "red", or without "blue"? It depends, perhaps, on our way of life. We may be able to do without these distinctions. Even so, the other colour words would have to be stretched to fill the gap in the spectrum. But when artists begin to make investigations into colour and begin to develop the notion of, or to discover about, primary colours, the pressure to invent "red" or "blue" will grow. And it is here that we may identify a, or the, logical role of these words, if not their origin. My account of belief fits this notion of "logical origin". Whether or not it is a notion that others have employed, I think it is clearly a worth-while and even an important one.

The distinctions between paradigm and non-paradigm, typical and non-typical, central and peripheral uses will not, I think, be important to me.

All these points need a good deal more by way of explanation and perhaps justification. But the proof of the pudding is, after all, in the eating. The best justification and explanation lies in the application of these ideas in the body of the thesis. If the approach that I have adopted resolves difficulties and offers a way out of an impasse, that is one important factor in favour of it. So I now turn to my subject - "Belief."

1. The dispositional account.

It appears that the disposition theory of belief was first put forward by Alexander Bain in "The Emotions and the Will" in 1859. Charles Pierce, among the American pragmatists, also held some form of this theory. In this century and country it is to be found early in Braithwaite's article in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society for 1932 - 33. And we also find it in Ryle's "The Concept of Mind." In section 3 of chapter 5 he says:-

"Belief might be said to be like knowledge and unlike trust in persons, zeal for causes or addiction to smoking, in that it is "propositional;" but this, though not far wrong, is too narrow. Certainly to believe that the ice is dangerously thin is to be unhesitant in telling oneself and others that it is thin, in acquiescing in other people's assertions to that effect, in objecting to statements to the contrary, in drawing consequences from the original proposition, and so forth. But it is also to be prone to skate warily, to shudder, to dwell in imagination on possible disasters and to warn other skaters. It is a propensity not only to make certain theoretical moves but also to make certain executive and imaginative moves, as well as to have certain feelings. But all these things hang together on a common propositional hook. The phrase 'thin ice' would occur in the description alike of the shudders, the warnings, the wary skating, the declarations, the inferences, the acquiescences and the objections."

The same theme is to be found in the passage quoted below. Ryle emphasises the variety of goings-on that beliefs are involved in: belief is a "determinable" disposition - "Concept of Mind" cap 5 (2). For the time being I propose to concentrate on the executive moves, on the straight-forward actions like spraying roses, driving cars, reciting poems, shaking hands,

and so on. Much, though not all, of the argument about the disposition theory of belief has centred on these moves; and the theoretical and imaginative moves, and the feelings, present more problems to the philosopher than the straight-forward actions.

The discussion will not reveal any knock-down arguments. In this chapter I will pursue objections of the kind that have been canvassed by other philosophers. It will become clear that the attempt to characterise the disposition is beset with difficulties of principle. However I will not discuss the crucial objection until chapter 2, as it does not centre on these difficulties in characterising the disposition.

The description of belief as a disposition to act must rely on a prior distinction between actions and events. How is this distinction to be drawn? It is characteristic of actions, that we discuss what the agent wants and what he believes, in connection with them; it is a commonplace to hang the distinction between actions and events on this peg. Beliefs do go with wants in this respect. When my heart beats or my leg jerks in response to the doctor's hammer, neither my beliefs nor my wishes are involved. Talk of my beliefs and wishes is in order when I kick a goal, go fishing, or make a move in a game of chess. But if both these concepts are to be analyzed in terms ofdispositions to act, how are we to tell what counts as an action, and hence which events satisfy the disposition? Of course, if we abandon the programme for one of the concepts, the day will be saved; but which one? And if one, why not the other? The only other alternative is to find some other peg for distinction. The snag is that there are no candidates that are clearly not dependant on either wishes or beliefs. The reply to this, is that the objection is based on a misunderstanding

of what is being claimed. Ryle makes the necessary point in section 3 of chapter 5 of "Concept of Mind".

"There is at our disposal an indefinitely wide range of dispositional terms for talking about things, living creatures and human beings. Some of these can be applied indifferently to all sorts of things; for example, some pieces of metal, some fishes and some human beings weigh 140 lbs., are elastic and combustible, and all of them, if left unsupported, fall at the same rate of acceleration. Other dispositional terms can be applied only to certain kinds of things; "hibernates," for example, can be applied with truth or falsity only to living creatures, and "Tory" can be applied with truth or falsity only to non-idiotic, non-infantile, non-barbarous human beings. Our concern is with a restricted class of dispositional terms, namely those appropriate only to the characterization of human beings."

Beliefs and wishes will be dispositions that apply to a restricted class, that of actions. Even so, the question why this should be so is not an illegitimate one. In the case of "hibernates," we could point out that only living creatures can sleep or be awake, and that would be at least a first answer for this case. But what are we to say of beliefs and wishes? How are we to distinguish between human actions, to which these dispositions will apply, and human reactions, to which they do not apply? One answer is that the complexity of the dispositions entitles us to distinguish between the events that satisfy them and those that do not; actions are enormously complicated. Another answer is to characterize the dispositions in terms that can apply only to actions; and phrases like "Acting in a way that is appropriate to p" or "in a way that is reasonable in the light of p" will do this.

Neither answer is really satisfactory. It is facile to insist that human actions are enormously complicated. Not all actions are complicated. And there are some events that are enormously complicated too. Indeed, any event can be represented as

enormously complicated, both in categorical description and in the dispositions that it satisfies. The second way is unsatisfactory partly because it does not do anything to resolve the original questions, and partly because it appears to be an ad hoc evasion of the objection. Why should this restriction be placed on the characterization? Merely to preserve the distinction between actions and events, so far as we can see. Moreover, this move means that the disposition is characterized not just in terms of what does or would happen, but in terms ofwhat should happen. This may be worth following up. One move like this will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

There are many phrases that suggest themselves, - "acting as if p were true," "on p", "in a way that is appropriate to p", "in a way that is reasonable if p", "in the light of p." All seem to leave out something crucial, in that it is possible to act in these ways without believing that p. One aspect of the problem becomes clear. Any characterization that can be applied only if p is true will not do, since people's beliefs may be false. But the characterizations that can be applied whether or not p is true will be false to the point that people believe that what they believe is true.

D.J. O'Connor, in P.A.S. 1968/69, writes as follows:-

"The principle objection to introducing the concept of 'acting as if' or 'being disposed to act as if' as an adequate analysis of belief is simply this. On the theory we are considering, to be disposed to act as if p were true must be not more than a necessary condition for believing p. If I do not act - or at least if I am not disposed to act - as if p were true, then I do not believe p. It cannot be a sufficient condition because there are many circumstances in which one might act as if p were true (or be disposed to do so) without believing

p. We have now to distinguish between the following propositions:-
E) He is disposed to act as if p were true, but he does not believe p.
F) He is disposed to act as if p were true, and he does believe p.
Since these differ in meaning and have their first clause in common, the difference must lie in the second clause. But if this is so, then "x believes p" cannot be analyzed without remainder in terms of acting-as-if and dispositions to do so. For if it could E) would be self-contradictory and F) a tautology (in the everyday sense of the term)."

This objection rests on too narrow an approach to what is being claimed. It may be admitted that E) is not obviously self-contradictory. But the point that O'Connor misses is that if E) is the case, we can expect the agent's true beliefs to show in some circumstances or other, actual or potential. The classic anti-dualist position is that they must show. It may be true that Sir Humphrey acts as if God will punish us for our sins, but that he does not believe it. We will claim this precisely because, for instance, he acts that way in public, but not in private; or if not for this reason, then for some similar one.

The analysis in terms of "acting as if p were true" must be taken to mean not merely that the agent does act in this or that way but that he would do so on other occasions, or that he will tend to do so. In this respect, belief-dispositions are no different from other dispositions. If we tap the glass and it does not shatter, this does not of itself prove that it isn't brittle. Whether we take the incident that way or not depends on a wide variety of circumstances. Again, consider "migratory." This term is a semi-dispositional one. The dispositional element in it can be roughly explained as "tending to make long journeys to a different (but fixed) habitat at a certain season of the year." Thus the swallow is a migratory bird because it tends to fly south in winter

and return in spring. Nonetheless, not all its southward flights are migrations; nor are all its long flights. For a given flight to count as a migration we must consider a wide variety of facts about the swallow, what it is doing now and what it would do in other circumstances. And so with beliefs.

This objection, and others like it, fails because they do not take into account the different kinds of relationship that there may be between a disposition and its events, and the flexibility of some of those relationships. And the answer given here will re-appear with monotonous regularity when more powerful objections are raised.

In saying that a word "signifies a disposition," we say that the word signifies that certain events will happen in certain circumstances. If belief is a disposition to act, then it will be a disposition to act in certain circumstances. One of the circumstances to be specified is the agent's wishes, or what his purpose at the given time is. A gardener who believes that spraying roses keeps down greenfly may or may not be observed spraying the roses at the appropriate time. If he wants good roses, he will presumably spray them. But if he prefers healthy green-fly, or doesn't care about the roses, then he will not. We can only determine what actions satisfy the determinable belief-disposition if we know what the agent wants. We must also know something about the situation he is in. In this case, it would be no good to find out what the gardener does in the depth of winter. But each of these necessities gives rise to its own difficulties.

The necessity of discovering what the agent wants is a difficulty, at least for the thorough-going dispositionalist. For wishes are not circumstances like the season of the year or the

poor state of the roses. Many philosophers have accepted that part, at least, of the meaning of talk about a person's motives, intentions or desires is given by saying that they are "dispositions to do...." See for example Ryle "The Concept of Mind" chapter 4, section 2, and more recently Charles Taylor in "The Explanation of Behaviour", p. 49. The position then is this. We are told that a man who believes that spraying the roses keeps down green-fly may or may not be seen spraying the roses. To discover what we can expect to see him do, we must look to his wishes, inter alia. But this is unhelpful. For when we ask about a man's wishes, we are told that if a man wants good roses, he may or may not spray them. It all depends on his beliefs, inter alia. If we are given one or the other, we can say something about what he can be expected to do. But we are not told how to get either without first having the other. The situation is like the one reported of Dr. Johnson's first dictionary, by those vague and anonymous sources that so often report apocryphal stories. A deer was defined as the female of a stag and a stag was defined as the male of a deer.

The interdependence of beliefs and wishes can be clearly set out by using a model that Braithwaite provides, explicitly as a model for the relation between belief and behaviour. The quotations are from the Aristotelian Society supplement of 1964. It is an application of what is variously called Theory of Games, or Decision Theory.

"To do this (sc. to apply this theory to belief), we need only consider the simplest possible abstract case, in which the agent (call him Luke) has a choice between only two possible actions, L', L", where L' will yield an outcome "a" if a proposition p is true, and an outcome "b" if p is false (i.e. if not-p is the case,) while L" will yield an outcome of "c" if p and "d" if not-p. This situation can be represented by a square diagram with four cells, in which Luke may

be regarded as having to choose between the two rows in the diagram, while the outcome he will get from his chosen action depends on whether p or not-p is true, so that the outcome he will get will be found in the cell where his chosen row is intersected by the first column, representing p, or the second column, representing not-p."

	p	not-p
L'	a	b
L"	c	d

Next we are introduced to the "domination principle." The various outcomes, a, b, c, d, can be ranked by Luke in different ways. Given this ranking the domination principle prescribes the choice of one horizontal row or the other, as being the action that will give Luke the greatest advantage.

"There are nine distinct cases, in three of which the domination principle will prescribe the choice of L', and in three of which it will prescribe the choice of L". There are three cases in which the principle gives no prescription."

Now for belief.

"My thesis is that to select the sub-situation consisting of the first (vertical) column is tantamount to being certain of p, to select the sub-situation consisting of the second column is tantamount to being certain of not-p, while to select the sub-situation which is the situation itself is tantamount to being uncertain between p and not-p."

Let us consider an example. On the next page, there are two squares on Braithwaite's pattern, but with the variables filled out to represent a possible situation - even a common one. In the first case, if we know which (horizontal) row Luke chooses, that is, if we know what he does, we have no way of knowing which vertical column he has chosen, nor what rank he gives to the outcome. If we knew one or the other, we could deduce the missing item. But unless there is a separate act of choice of the column, or

of ranking outcomes, we can get nowhere. In normal actions, there is no separate act of choice for these. Not all cases are so difficult. In the second case, we can work out what we need if Luke takes his umbrella. But if he does not, we are left without help. Moreover, if he does take his umbrella in a real situation, things are more complicated than we have allowed here. The possible outcomes are never so restricted as these examples assume. If we complicate the second case a little, the one clear choice becomes unclear too.

First example:-

	The neighbours like music.	The neighbours do not like music.
Luke plays his gramophone.	The neighbours will be happy.	The neighbours will not be happy.
Luke does not play his gramophone.	The neighbours will not be happy.	The neighbours will be happy.

Second example:-

	It will rain.	It will not rain.
Luke takes his umbrella on his walk.	Luke does not get wet.	Luke does not get wet.
Luke leaves his umbrella behind.	Luke gets wet.	Luke does not get wet.

The dispositionalist's answer to this quandary is basically the same as the answer to O'Connor's objection. Of course we cannot discover everything just by watching a man act on one occasion. We must see what he does on lots of different occasions, and consider what he would do in yet other situations. There is no logical circularity here, for the dispositions are

specified in different ways. Wishes might be dispositions to do what will achieve the end wished for, or to do what one wishes to do. Beliefs might be dispositions to act as if p were true, for instance. The problem raised here is heuristic, not logical. No-one ~~One-one~~ would claim that it is always easy to discover someone's wishes and beliefs.

Even so, the picture of dispositions interacting in this way is a strange one. A possible parallel is from the science of mechanics. Here, one talks of forces acting on a body in different directions, and of the resultant force moving this body. But then there will be a debate whether these cases really are parallel, even if we do treat forces as dispositions to move. Two forces are clearly dispositions of the same kind, just as two wishes are. There are more convincing examples. "He tends to stutter when he gets excited." "An angry man is usually careless." "A heavy car tends to use more petrol than a light one."

There is another problem. The agent's wishes are not the only circumstance that must be specified before we can say what a given belief will lead the agent to do. The attempt to specify these other circumstances gives rise to an infinite hierarchy of dispositions.

In the Aristotelian Society's supplement for 1946, Braithwaite offered a second characterization of belief. (By 1964, he has moved away from this account. But this article brings out my point, and it was the one that Chisholm criticized in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society for 1955 - 56.) Braithwaite's claim is that a man who believes p will act in a way that is appropriate to p being true.

"To say that a man's action is appropriate to a proposition's being true is to say that the action is such that it tends to fulfil the

'springs of action' if the proposition is true but does not tend to fulfil them if the proposition is false."

He explains that a man always acts in "suitable conditions."

"The suitable conditions are of two sorts - external, (which I will call 'occasions') and internal, (which I will call the 'springs of action.').....The internal conditions are the intentions, desires, wants, motives, instinctive needs and drives of the believer at the time when the external occasion for the appropriate action arises."

Chisholm gives two counter-examples, which illustrate the point that the supposed external conditions must be believed to hold, as distinct from their actually holding. So we conclude that external conditions are irrelevant, after all.

"Let us suppose that a driver, wishing to keep an appointment with a friend and believing, truly, that the friend is waiting along a certain road, acts on his belief by taking that road; and let us suppose further that he has an accident, with the consequence that many of his springs of action - including his desire to meet his friend - are frustrated. (We may say, if we choose, that his false belief that the road would be safe was the real source of his trouble.....But this does not absolve his true belief.)"

And again, to counter these being sufficient conditions.

"Let us suppose that someone en route to the bank, where he wants to get some money, finds a pocket-book which is full and that this find satisfies the relevant springs of action."

It might be argued that these are not really counter-examples. The definition refers to actions "tending to fulfill the springs of action." But if these examples are not satisfactory, others can be produced. For Chisholm's point is that the actions as described may not in fact tend to fulfill the springs of action, or that the springs may not in fact tend to be fulfilled by the action that the agent is carrying out.

The definition is wrong in two ways. A man does not always act in such a way as to fulfill his springs of action,

even if his beliefs are true. He always acts in the way that he believes will fulfil his springs of action, given his beliefs. He may always be mistaken about this, and so the qualification is needed. Indeed, on the disposition theory, his acting in a certain way is evidence that he has this belief. Besides this qualification, we need a similar one for the external occasions. He may be right or wrong about these as well. So we must say only that they must be believed to hold. Again, the disposition theory requires this too.

Even if we could find some statement of external occasions such that "believes" was unnecessary, we should have proved too much. For we would then have a story to tell that was indistinguishable from a causal story. But it is one mark, at least, of an event as opposed to an action, that an event occurs when and only when certain (causal) conditions obtain. Beliefs and wishes are not in question. But this is just what a characterization of a belief-disposition would be if it was immune from this difficulty.

Chisholm claims that the re-appearance of beliefs in the <u>definiens</u> is circular. I do not see that this is strictly true. It is not that "believe" is defined in terms of "believe," but rather that "...believes that p" is defined in terms of "...believes that q." One could defend this. The primitive logical symbols are defined in terms of each other. But that case is different, since they can also be defined in other ways, notably by means of the truth-tables. A more persuasive point can be made if we look at the consequences of this move.

As the argument has gone so far, we can expand "Fred believes that spraying the roses keeps down green-fly" into the following complex statement:-

If i) Fred believes that certain circumstances obtain,
and (ii) he wants good roses,
and (iii) he believes that, given i) and ii), it is appropriate to spray the roses,
and (iv) there is nothing else he thinks more important,
then (v) Fred will spray the roses, (etc.)

In fact, this is only one determinate of the determinable disposition. If one condition is changed, others may have to be revised as well. The difficulty is that all the clauses i) - iii) are themselves are dispositional, and so need to be rewritten in their expanded forms. If they refer to Fred's spraying the roses, the definition is circular. But even if they do not, the word "believes" will re-appear in the new version, leading to yet more expansion, ad infinitum.

Is this conclusive? The dispositionalist can retreat again to "what Fred will do on other occasions" as a way of finding out about these second-order dispositions. But this move now looks like a cloak for vacuity. Dispositions are tendencies for things to happen under certain circumstances. But no circumstances for the actions to happen under are, or can be, specified. I mentioned this piling up of dispositions as a difficulty earlier on, and suggested that we could find harmless parallels for it. (See p.9) But there is a crucial difference that is now clear. In those cases, the dispositions could readily be broken down to the events that satisfy them and the circumstances in which they are said to occur. But we cannot see how to do this in the case of belief.

There is one other move open to the dispositionalist. He can acknowledge the points made above, and say that any characterization of the circumstances in which an agent acts

must be qualified by a ceteris paribus clause. The agent, on this view, will act in a certain way, if other things are equal. This is a qualification that must be written in to the story about other dispositions, and it must be added to many hypothetical statements. One example where this is true is "If you strike this match, it will light." This is a true statement but there are many circumstances under which the striking of the match will not be followed by its lighting. Not many matches will light if they are struck in a bucket of water, or in an atmosphere that contains no oxygen. The attempt to state all the exceptions would be an endless one. So we qualify the hypothetical with "ceteris paribus."

The necessity of qualifying hypotheticals in this way is a complication of a different kind and a different order from the quandary that the disposition theory creates. In the case of hypotheticals, we can specify some circumstances in which we expect the relevant events to occur. On this account of belief, we cannot do that. We find in hypotheticals that we must bear in mind the many exceptions. We do not find the indefinitely ramifying structure of dispositions that we face if we accept the dispositions theory of belief. W.W. Mellor in "Knowing, Believing, Behaving" in Mind 1967 offers a version of the theory that might avoid some of these difficulties. Mellor's strategy is to develop a legitimate sense of "disposed to act appropriately to p." He starts by talking of knowledge and of behaviour's being appropriate to the facts. Then he weakens what he says about knowledge to fit the case of belief. Knowledge is to be explicated by means of certain of the terms that we use to appraise action. "A knows that p" means that "A is disposed to act in some way in which in the light of the fact that p, together with other relevant factors, he would do well to act."

The main other relevant factors are other facts known to A, his beliefs and his motives. Knowledge is an ability to do what is recommendable in the light of that knowledge. The ability that knowledge brings is a "minimal" one. It is an ability in the sense that anyone is able to play chess, or make chess moves, as opposed to the abilities that a skilled chess-player has. Any strong sense of "ability" will be vulnerable to counter-examples in which the agent fails to do what is appropriate either because of some strong emotion (e.g. panic) or because of a mistake or lapse due to stupidity or even made because of knowledge that he possesses.

Mellor emphasizes two features of the appraisal vocabulary to which this account refers. First, it is purely permissive, and has no prescriptive words in it; the strongest words it has are "justifiable" and "allowable." It applies to behaviour that is not deliberate as well as behaviour that is, as long as it is controllable. It is rich in excuse-words. Second, the basic question underlying these appraisals is "To what extent is the agent's behaviour warranted or justified by the situation which provokes it, or excusable or understandable in the light of that situation?"

Mellor avoids saying that "Knowledge is a capacity to adjust behaviour in some systematic way to the facts of one's environment." The difficulties that I have been discussing sprang from trying to do this or something very like it. Mellor gives two reasons. "Systematic," he says, implies that there are rules or laws relating situations, knowledge and behaviour. But if this were so, there would be no distinction between a causal story of action and a story in terms of knowledge. Second, mistakes and lack of knowledge will always invalidate any non-causal rules. It is at this

stage that the crucial point is made. Mellor says:-

"The point is that the concept of knowledge, in its relations to behaviour, cannot be explained without some normative concept of what it is proper, desirable, or at least permissable to do if such and such is the case. For without introducing the notion of a set of standards of some kind, we have no general way of saying what it is that knowledge enables us to do. It is perfectly right to say 'knowledge is what enables us to vary out behaviour systematically according to the facts'; but the system must be described as one which we ought to follow, not merely as one which we do in fact follow.

"By supplementing the notion of the recommendable with that of the permissible, or, more idiomatically, that of 'behaviour for which man has good cause,' we can broaden the relevant standards sufficiently to cover the difficult cases, while keeping within the same logical framework."

The analysis that comes out of all this is:-

"'A knows that p' implies that A is likely to behave in some way which is either recommendable, or at least permissible, in the light of the fact that p, and,
if A does in fact behave in some way of this kind, he probably would not have behaved in that particular way had it not been recommendable or at least permissible in the light of the fact that p, unless there were some other reason for doing so, and,
this only applies if A holds no relevant beliefs which are both unreasonable and false."

"Believes" is accommodated by saying "that would be recommendable, or at least permissible, if p were true."

At least one philosopher who opposes the dispositional view of belief has advanced a description of explanations of action that is remarkably like this one. Dray first stated this view in "Laws and Explanation in History," and a later restatement is to be found in an article by him in "Philosophy and History" edited by S. Hook.

"Understanding is achieved when the historian can see the reasonableness of a man's doing what the agent did, given the beliefs and purposes referred to; his action can then be explained as having been an 'appropriate' one.

"What it (sc. the action explanation) aims to show is that the sort of thing he did made perfectly good sense from his point of view."

Mellor started his article by saying that a belief was more like a set of possible dispositions than a disposition. He contrasts belief with motives, which are more like dispositions in ordinary language. They signify a positive likelihood that the events will occur, rather than the simple fact that they will or would occur. This is an interesting, if slightly puzzling, remark. It is a pity that by the end of the article he is saying that a belief is like a policy, namely a policy of conducting oneself as if p were true. For this seems to me a return to the view that belief is a disposition <u>simpliciter.</u> Another thing that is to be regretted in this analysis is the "likely to do..." in it. For in the early stages of the article, Mellor says that he does not think it an adequate characterization of the belief-disposition if "probably" occurs in it. For then the criterion of belief will give no guidance in those cases where the agent does not act in the way the characterization specifies. His analysis is different in that it talks of "likelihood" in the 'ordinary language' way, and in that the word "ought" occurs in it. But I do not see that these differences evade the problem, that he raises himself.

The difficulties that I have raised before can still be found here. Mellor has not avoided reference to what the agent wants. For it is written in by the reference to "what is recommendable or at least permissible." The officer who is pinned

down by snipers in a wood will find one sort of action recommendable, namely, destroying them, because of his desire to win the battle. But one of his privates, with the same knowledge of the situation, will find recommendable an action that is not even permissible from the officer's point of view, namely, a prompt retreat, if he wishes to preserve his skin. This example casts doubt on the suggestion that difficulties are avoided by the reference to "what is permissible."

Another objection that recurs from earlier discussion is that what the agent does is what seems to him to be reasonable rather than what is reasonable. One possible answer to this is to write in a ceteris paribus clause; "the agent is likely to do....ceteris paribus." Mellor might reply that the point that what the agent does is what seems to him to be reasonable is supplementary to his analysis, but does not invalidate it.

The fundamental objection to this story is that it puts the cart before the horse. It is both true and important that we have the appraisal vocabulary to which Mellor appeals. But it cannot be made to serve Mellor's purpose. For the analysis requires us to posit belief and wants in the agents such that his actions will appear, or become, reasonable. But if this is how it works, how could we ever assess an action unfavourably? That is, how could we ever say that what someone did was unreasonable or impermissible, even in the light of his beliefs and wants?

Only actions can be reasonable or unreasonable, permissible or impermissible in the required sense. At least, actions are described in these ways, but events are not. But it is surely absurd to suppose that all actions are reasonable. One may carry out an action in the light of one's beliefs and wishes, and still do something unreasonable. But if we accept the account offered here,

this will not be possible. We will construct beliefs and wants such that the action comes out reasonable.

The point can be explained in another way. The vocabulary and standards that we are calling into use are to do with the appraisal of actions from a certain point of view. But we cannot appraise the action in these terms until we know what the agent's beliefs and wishes are. When we say that an action is reasonable from the agent's point of view, we are assessing it in the light of what we have already discovered about it. One thing that it is important to discover is what the agent believes and wants. So in assessing what he does as reasonable, we must already know about them. Without beliefs and wishes, the action fails to be an action at all, and so not even a candidate for assessment in this way. An action may be reasonable or it may not; it depends on the agent's beliefs and wishes. But Mellor assumes the result of the assessment in order to be able to work out one of the factors involved in making it. This is to put the cart before the horse. It is as if one were to say that an Alsation is to be defined as the kind of dog that wins prizes in the Alsation class in the dog show. To the uninformed enquirer this is no use, unless of course we tell him independently which class is the Alsation class. The whole point of this appraisal vocabulary is that actions can be placed on a scale of assessment by the use of it. One of the things we must consider in placing them on the scale is the agent's beliefs and wishes. So we can hardly expect first to place it, then to discover what the relevant beliefs and wishes were. Statements about what the agent wants and believes are preliminaries, not postcripts. Mellor does discuss a difficulty closely related to this one on p. 335.

"What, however, should we say if A, knowing that p, does something very stupid, yet does it <u>because</u> he knows that p?"
"The best answer seems to be that.....the agent must by definition have been trying to do something commendable..."

This may be acceptable in cases of laziness or panic. Mellor deals with this by weakening the sense in which knowledge is an ability to do what is recommendable, and finally admits that any such assimilation must be pretty heavily qualified. For "a man may become demoralized, panic-stricken, enraged or wildly elated because he knows some fact." He adds that although one cannot recommend laughter, fear, anger, etc., they can be commended as "appropriate."

But this does not meet my objection at all. For my objection is precisely that behaviour is not always assessed favourably, that is, that an agent is <u>not</u> by definition "trying" to do something commendable." Mellor is considering cases where the agent's behaviour is not assessed favourably. And the assessment is made in the light of the agent's knowledge. How can this be, if the criterion of knowing depends on giving a favourable assessment of the behaviour?

It would be a mistake to press this objection too far. For it is true in general that explanations of actions aim to show that the action did make sense from the agent's point of view. In cases of the kind that create difficulties for Mellor, we do demand a fuller story so that we can see that the stupidity or panic is comprehensible, if not actually recommendable. But there may not be a story that satisfies us. It is possible for a mistake or a panic to be simply inexplicable. It may not be possible to see it as making any kind of sense. We may in the end give up the attempt. We start on the basis that what the agent did

made some sort of sense. When his behaviour does not make sense, when it is not warranted or justified by the situation, then we start to ask questions.

I accept that "the basic question underlying these appraisals is 'To what extent is the agent's behaviour warranted or justified by the situation which provokes it?'" But it is forced and unnatural to insist that "knows" and "believes" apply to behaviour. It is natural and easy to see "knows" and "believes" as part of the language that we use to describe the situation which provokes the behaviour. After all, "he knows that..." and "he believes that.." are usually to be completed by a description of a situation rather than of an action. Contrast in this respect "wants" and "intends" etc. Only after we have a description of the situation that provokes the action can we answer this basic question.

Mellor identifies the problem correctly. It is to explain what the propositional hook is that Ryle mentions in "Concept of Mind" (p. 129, quoted on p. 11 of this thesis.) But Mellor interprets the problem as giving a characterization of the sort of thing that one who holds a certain belief is prone to do. What we need is an exploration of the complexities of describing the situation that provokes an action, not of actions. He has not really avoided any of the difficulties in the dispositional approach. But then, why should we expect any such characterization to be available? Perhaps we should be prepared to say that there is not any particular sort of thing that one who holds a certain belief is prone to do. Perhaps even if such a characterization were available, it would be beside the point.

2. Dispositions as explanations

Disposition words are special. But it is not easy to say exactly in what way they are special. Ryle says in "Concept of Mind," p.125:-

"Dispositions are neither reports of observed or observable states of affairs, nor yet reports of unobserved or unobservable states of affairs. They narrate no incidents. But their jobs are intimately connected with narratives of incidents, for, if they are true, they are satisfied by narrated incidents."

And on p.43:-

"To possess a dispositional property is not to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change; it is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state or undergo a particular change."

One orthodox way of summarizing the special job of disposition words is that their job is the licensing of inferences about what will happen or what is likely to happen in certain circumstances. That is why a disposition word can be expanded into hypothetical form, and why they are connected with laws, generalizations and predictions. "This glass is brittle" becomes "If this glass is struck sharply (etc.), it will shatter (ceteris paribus)." Categorical words, on the other hand simply report what disposition words have licensed us to infer.

But this is not sufficient to mark disposition words off from categorical words. "Cows are ruminants" and "He is a heavy smoker" look like good enough reports. We can form hypotheticals from categorical words. Indeed, the Phenomenalist programme turned on the fact that we can do this. "This is round" gives rise to "If this is placed on a (sufficiently) smooth surface, it will roll down it," (and so on). "This is rubber" gives rise to "If this is dropped on to a suitable surface, it will bounce." It is true that disposition words license inferences. But so do categorical words. The distinction will

not be saved by suggesting that we can never paraphrase categorical words with hypothetical statements "completely." We cannot do that for many dispositions either - for example, determinable ones. This distinction needs to be drawn in a rather different way.

Categorical words may licence inferences. But this is not the same as being an inference-license. It is the function of disposition words to license inferences. It is not just something we sometimes do with them. But it is just something we sometimes do with categorical words. The hypothetical statements are implied, in a strict sense, by the disposition words. They give their meaning. But in the case of categorical words, the hypothetical statements do not give their meaning, but their consequences, which are to be discovered empirically (usually). This difference can be summarized by saying that the hypothetical statements are "built in to" disposition words, but not in to categorical words. The difference in the roles can be brought out in a general formula. Sometimes, case A, we say of an object (or person) that, because it (he) has some property, it (he) will react to certain treatment in certain ways. Sometimes, case B, we say that something has the property of reacting to certain treatment in certain ways. The first formula shows the role of the categorical words, and the second that of the disposition words.

The terms that Toulmin introduces in "The Uses of Argument" to describe the lay-out of arguments allow the differences to be stated briefly and comparatively clearly. Disposition words function as warrants, licensing certain moves from circumstances to behaviour, or from data to conclusion. Categorical words provide the backing for these warrants. They justify using certain warrants, but are not warrants.

There is no need to suppose that the distinction is a rigid one. A word may play both roles at once and so qualify as

semi-dispositional or "mongrel-categorical." It may also be that some words are categorical relative to some other words, but dispositional relative to others. For example, this claim might be made by someone who accepted phenomenalism. "He is a smoker" could be explained as meaning "Under certain circumstances, he smokes." While "He is smoking" would be explained, on a phenomenalist account, as "Under certain circumstances, certain sense-data will be available." A more neutral example, philosophically, is "hibernates." "Bears hibernate" can be explained as "During the winter, bears sleep." "The bears are asleep" can be explained as "The bears are not walking about, looking for food, etc. They are in caves and sheltered places, lying quietly. They will not react to the outside world in the ways they usually do." "Sleep" is dispositional relative to the latter collection of words, but categorical relative to "hibernates."

This does undermine the distinction. It will now have to be drawn, not between different groups of words, but between different uses of words. In one context, a word may be a warrant for some inference. In another, it may be backing for a different inference.

It is now possible to say where the quarrel with the disposition theory of belief lies. It can be agreed that we do have some expectations about the actions of a man with a given belief. The question is whether statements about a man's beliefs are backing for the particular inferences that they license, or whether they are simply licences to infer. In their use to explain actions, belief statements behave more like the categorical properties in case A above, than like the dispositional properties in case B.

Ryle points out that we must distinguish carefully between explanations of the form "The glass shattered because it was hit with a hammer," (1), and explanations of the different form "The glass

shattered when it was hit with a hammer, because it was brittle." (2) But it is not clear that (2) is an explanation at all. If we expand (2) to its overtly hypothetical form, it becomes (2a) "The glass shattered when it was hit with a hammer, because it has a propensity to shatter when struck by a hard object such as a hammer." The supposed explanation is little more than a restatement of what is to be explained in a somewhat more general form.

The allegation that (2) is not really an explanation of anything can be backed up. A respectable answer to the question "Why did the glass shatter when it was hit with a hammer?" (3), is "Because it was of molecular structure M." (4). But this is also a respectable answer to the question "Why is the glass brittle?" (5). The expansion of the disposition to its hypothetical form, as in (2a), shows that this should be no surprise. In one good sense, questions (3) and (5) are the same question. They have the same answer.

Genuine explanations must tell us something that we did not know, or at least remind us of something that we are not told in the question. Either, like (1) they must offer the data, the initial conditions, that "produce" what is to be explained. Or, like (4), they must offer the backing for an inference-schema given in the question. (2) and (2a) merely offer the warrant for a move that has already been made, and so do not tell us anything we did not already know. If someone knows enough to ask (3), he knows enough to ask (5) - provided he knows what the word "brittle" means.

Statements about what someone believes, on the other hand, are perfectly respectable answers to the question "Why...?" "Why is he spraying the roses?" "Because he believes that spraying the roses keeps down green-fly (etc.)" And this rather question-begging appeal to intuition can be backed up. Consider the following:-

(i) "Why is he running away from the bull?"

(ii) "Because he is afraid of it."

(iii) "Why is he afraid of it?"

(iv) "Because he believes that it will attack him."

(iv) can be an answer to either (iii) or (i) in exactly the same way that (4) could answer either (3) or (5) above. Furthermore, if one knows enough to ask (i), one knows enough to ask (iii), - provided one knows the meaning of the word "afraid." So the parallel is close. The questions and answers in the "bull" case are inter-related in the same way as the questions and answers in the "glass" case. But the statement about what the man believes plays the role of the categorical statement, not that of the disposition statement. "Believes" does not play the role of a disposition word.

One might object to my example. It is only plausible if "afraid" is taken to mean simply "liable to run away or otherwise avoid the object of fear." But "afraid" is much more complicated than that. One may fear something and not run away or otherwise avoid it. One may be afraid of the bull but stand one's ground (which is really safer), or even advance towards it. We should say, not just doing it, but doing it, <u>because</u> the bull is dangerous, or at least because it is believed to be dangerous or liable to attack. But then the belief that the bull is liable to attack is built in to the notion of fear, and the distinction between answers (ii) and (iv) collapses.

An example that would back my claim would be an example that was clearly a disposition, but one that could be explained by a belief. Many dispositions such as "being a smoker" might be explicable by reference to a belief, but often are not explicable in that way. An artificial example would suffer just because it was artificial. In any case, my point can be made in terms of this example.

It is just that we need to go in to what is involved in the notion of fear a little further.

It is too simple to say that a belief that the bull is dangerous is built in to the notion of fear. Someone may believe that the bull is dangerous but not be afraid of it. He may not be afraid of it because he also believes that he can control the bull, or because he also believes that he can escape any danger, or because he had taken all possible steps to avoid the danger. And one may believe that there is no danger from the bull, that it is not dangerous (perhaps it is asleep) and yet fear it. So there are cases where both the belief and the actions that we expect to find associated with fear are separated from it.

There is a third kind of consideration that is involved in saying that people are afraid or not afraid. There are various involuntary reactions that are associated with fear. A man who is afraid may have a pale face, sweat heavily, be tense and restless etc.

These three different kinds of consideration meet in the notion of fear. It is also plausible to say that, in one way or another these are the considerations that meet in description of emotions and moods. We do not always give the same weight to them or even demand that they are all present. But they are distinct kinds of consideration. There is obviously a difference in kind between the actions, in a full blooded sense of "action" of a man who is afraid, and his involuntary reactions. The difference lies in the possibility that one might show up without the other. The difference in kind between the relevant beliefs and the others shows up in the same way. So these complications, far from weakening my claim, reinforce it.

My complaint about dispositions as explanations

(of actions) has been made elsewhere. P.T. Geach says in a brief passage in "Mental Acts" (p.5) that to say that belief is a disposition to behave puts belief statements, as explanations of action, on a par with the statement that opium puts people to sleep because it had dormitive power. W. Dray in "Laws and Explanation in History" spends much time on closely related arguments. Especially in chapters I - IV, he opposes what he aptly calls, the "covering law" account of explanation. But he does allow that dispositions can have explanatory power, and in V:7 claims that dispositions can be said to be causes. (See also V:6)

It is too much to claim that dispositional words are of no value at all as explanations. But there is a question how dispositional words are of value as explanations, and then whether they are of value for the same reasons as categorical words, whether they carry their explanatory force in the same way as categorical words.

One answer to the first question can be found in defending the "covering law" account of explanation against the objection that it devalues explanations by putting them on a par with the explanation that appeals to dormitive power. This objection arises because both dispositions and explanations on the "covering law" account can be stated in the form of hypothetical generalizations or laws covering and connecting certain initial conditions with the event to be explained.

C.G. Hempel describes the theory in an article "Explanation and Science in History," (reprinted in "Philosophy of Science" ed. P.H. Nidditch.) Hempel gives an example of explanation, and continues:-

"This explanatory account may be regarded as an argument to the effect that the event to be explained (let me call it the explanandum event) was to be expected by reason of certain explanatory facts. These may be divided into two groups: (i) particular facts and (ii) uniformities expressed by general laws.....If we imagine these various presuppositions explicitly spelled out, the idea suggests itself of construing the explanation as a deductive argument of this form.

$$(D) \qquad \frac{C_1, C_2, \ldots C_k \quad L_1, L_2, \ldots L_r}{E}$$

Here, $C_1, C_2, \ldots C_k$ are statements describing the particular facts invoked; $L_1, L_2, \ldots L_r$ are general laws; jointly, these statements will be said to form the explanans. The conclusion E is a statement describing the explanandum event....

"The kind of explanation thus characterized I will call <u>deductive-nomological</u> explanation;....."

The uniformities to be cited in the explanation are far more general than any uniformity given in the questions being asked. Hempel's example makes this clear. Glasses were taken out of hot soapy water after being washed, and placed upside down to drain. It was observed that bubbles grew at the rim of the glasses, and then contracted and disappeared. This is to be explained by reference, ultimately, to the gas laws and to the laws of thermodynamics. An explanation that said no more than that the events described always or usually happened would clearly be of no value. So an attack on the value of dispositions as explanations is not necessarily an attack on the "covering law" account of explanation.

But this suggests a way in which disposition words may have value as explanations. The examples of disposition words that I have used have all been highly determinate. So they may be beyond rescue as explanations. It doesn't follow that determinable dispositions, more complicated and more general, will be without explanatory force. If "A believes that p" is a disposition, it is a complicated, determinable one.

Dray gives an excellent example, quoting a passage from I.D. Jones' "The English Revolution" (p.85), in which he accounts for Cromwell's political decisions in the late 1640's:-

"His speeches and letters show his difficulty in reaching decisions and his reluctance to assume responsibility; he had not the mind that could plan ahead, but the genius that acted on impulse. He originated none of the many schemes of his party; he took fire from the ideas of others, such as Ireton, Harrison, and Lambert. He waited, often in agonies of indecision, for guidance from "Providences" - the hand of God revealed in events; he read the omens like a Roman Consul. This alone and adequately explains his sudden adoption of the extremists in May 1647 and December 1648, and his final decision on Charles' death ...."

In this case, the question "Why....?" about the particular actions does not look nearly the same as the question "Why....?" about Cromwell's tendencies to act. One might well know of the particular acts, without being aware that they are examples of these tendencies of Cromwell's. For the tendencies cited here are far more general compared with the particular actions in question, than were the dispositions I considered earlier compared with the events they were related to. The explanation works in a way very similar to the way that the "covering laws" work in Hempel's account.

There are other possibilities for rescuing dispositions. In Analysis of December 1968, there is an article called "Are dispositions causes?" by Roger Squires. The main purpose of this article is to attack D.M. Armstrong's account of dispositions, of which more below. But he ends his article with these positive suggestions:-

"These explanations may help in various ways. First, they may point to the fact that certain events were indeed causal factors, such as a small stone that hit the glass or a chance remark that inflamed the irascible person. This is to say that the small stone did break the glass and that the outburst was an angry reaction to the remark. Second, the explanations indicate that the glass broke because it was of a certain kind, that the angry outburst was an angry reaction to the remark is to be explained by reference to the particular type of person involved. Not all glasses would break so. Not all people would react so.....

"Thus it would be wiser to say, not that a dispositional explanation gives

the cause of an event, as that it shows where the cause of an event is to be found. It is rather like saying that the weather was responsible for the good crops. This rules out certain explanations, such as the richness of the soil, or the special breed of corn. But it only indicates the area in which to look for a cause...."

But there is nothing here to make the dispositional account of belief more plausible. The first of Squires' suggestions runs up against the dilemma about the antecedent of the hypothetical in expansion of a belief statement. Either these conditions must be, not true, but believed to be true, in which case we have infinitely regressing beliefs; or the resulting hypothetical will be just a causal law, of the kind invoked in the "covering law" account of explanation.. Then we will have lost the distinction between actions and events. Even those who have claimed that explanations of action are causal have also allowed that there was something special about the causes, namely that they are beliefs and wants. But these notions disappear on the dispositional analysis.

Squires' second suggestion also is implausible as applied to belief. A belief statement does not merely say that there is something special but unspecified about the person involved. Rather, it tells us what the something special is. An angry outburst might be explained by saying that Jones gets like that when he has had one or two. The something special is, let us say, a physiological condition. But it might also be explained by reference to his belief that the immigrants are ruining the British Way of Life. If this is not describing what it is about him in particular, but merely saying that there is something special but unspecified about him, then I am at a loss to say what might count as saying what the something special is. Nor is it plausible to say that an appeal to what someone believes is merely exclusion of possible, as it is plausible in the explanation of Cromwell's actions. The idea

that the explanation works in the same way as "covering law" explanations work is implausible as applied to belief statements for all these reasons - except the last. What is plausible is that what someone believes is like one of the initial conditions of action.

Disposition words may be acceptable as explanations. But my claim is not that disposition words cannot be acceptable explanations at all, while belief statements can be. It is rather that disposition words and belief statements carry their explanatory force in different ways. These arguments can only go part of the way to demonstrating my claim. They cannot be conclusive without a clear explanation of the way in which belief statements carry their explanatory force. And the explanation, when it comes, will have to avoid falling back on any appeal to occult causes.

There is another approach to the notion of a disposition. This not only offers an answer to my question about the way in which disposition words carry their explanatory force. It is also a foundation for the rather different claim that beliefs are causes of actions. This is the "Realist" theory of dispositions. This theory is to be contrasted with the "phenomenalist" theory which, it seems, I have adopted. The "Realist" theory claims that dispositions are causes. It is propounded by D.M. Armstrong in "A Materialist Theory of the Mind."

3. The "Realist" account of dispositions.

I shall start this discussion by allowing Armstrong an extended opportunity to state his view. On p.86 of "A Materialist Theory of Mind," he says:-

"According to the Realist view, to speak of an object's having a dispositional property entails that the object is in some non-dispositional state or that it has some property (there exists a 'categorical basis') which is responsible for the object manifesting certain behaviour in certain circumstances, manifestations whose nature makes the dispositional property the dispositional property it is. It is true that we may not know anything of the nature of the non-dispositional state. But, the Realist view asserts, in asserting that a certain piece of glass is brittle, for instance, we are ipso facto asserting that it is in a certain non-dispositional state which disposes it to shatter and fly apart in a wide variety of circumstances. Ignorance of the nature of the state does not affect the issue. The Realist view gains some support from ordinary language, where we often seem to identify a disposition and its 'categorical basis.' ('It has been found that brittleness is a certain sort of molecular pattern in the material'.)

"I will now present an 'a priori' argument which purports to prove the truth of the Realist account of dispositions. Let us consider the following case. Suppose that, on a number of occasions, a certain rubber has the same force, F, applied to it, and that on each occasion it stretches one inch. We can then attribute a disposition to the band. It is disposed to stretch one inch under force F.

"Now one essential thing about dispositions is that we can attribute them to objects even at times when the circumstances in which the object manifests its dispositions do not obtain. Suppose, now, that I say of the band that, if it had been subjected to force F at T', a time when it was not so subjected, it would have stretched one inch. What warrant have I for my statement? Consider first the answer tha a Realist about dispositions will give. He will say that there is every reason to believe that the categorical state of the band which is responsible for its stretching one inch under force F obtains at T'. Given that it does obtain at T', then, as a matter of physical necessity, the band must stretch one inch under force F.

"But what answer can the Phenomenalist about dispositions give? For him, a disposition does not entail the existence of a categorical state. The only reason he can give for saying that the band would have stretched one inch under force F at T' is that numerically the same band behaved in this way on other occasions. But now we may ask the Phenomenalist 'What is the magic in numerical identity?' A thing can change its properties over a period of time. Why sould it not change its dispositional properties? How does the Phenomenalist know what the band's dispositional properties are at T'? He may reply 'We have every reason to think that the relevant categorical properties of the object are unchanged at T', so we have every reason to think that the dispositional properties are unchanged.' But since he has asserted that the connection between 'categorical basis' and dispositional property is a contingent, not a necessary one, he can only be arguing that there is a contingent connection between categorical properties and the fact that the band has that dispositional property at T'. But how could one ever establish a contingent connection between categorical properties and unfulfilled possibilities? It is not as if one could observe the unfulfilled possibilities independently, in order to see how they are correlated with the categorical properties! It seems that the Phenomenalist about dispositions will be reduced to utter scepticism about dispositions, except on occasions that they are actually manifested."

On this account, dispositions are causes, or causal factors. So they carry their explanatory force in the same way as causes. But this answer won't help us. The difficulty was that it is not an explanation of the behaviour of an object to say that it could be expected to behave in that way under those circumstances. But it is no more of an explanation to be told that there is some (unspecified and perhaps unknown) state of the object, such that it could be expected to behave in that way under those circumstances. It isn't much of an explanation to say "That could be expected." It isn't any more helpful to be told "That was caused by some state of the object," unless we are told what state of the object.

I have already referred to Squires' criticism of this theory (p.40). This was the first of a series of articles on the

subject. The others are:-

2. "Are dispositions causes?" L. Stevenson, Analysis, June 1969.

3. "Some misconceptions about dispositions." D. Coder, Analysis, June 1969.

4. "Dispositions are causes." D.M. Armstrong, Analysis, October 1969.

5. "Are dispositions lost causes?" J.E.R. Squires, Analysis, December 1969.

I shall identify Squires' first article as no. 1. His main objection is that the account gives rise to an infinite regress.

"Since the object would have the dispositional property and, hence, according to this account, the categorical basis, even if no manifestations occurred, Armstrong can only mean that the basis would cause the object to behave in the relevant ways in appropriate circumstances. In short, he is attributing a dispositional property to the categorical basis, suspiciously similar to that which was originally attributed to the object itself.

"But we must then apply his analysis to this new dispositional property. It will entail that the categorical basis has itself a categorical basis with yet another dispositional property. According to this view, then, in attributing a dispositional property to anything at all, we are committed to the outrageous thesis that there is an infinity of categorical bases waiting for scientists to suggest appropriate identifications, all sitting inside the object like Chinese boxes."

The essence of Armstrong's reply in 4 is:-

"If it is then asked 'What constitutes the potentiality of that state to act as it is capable of acting?' can we not answer 'That same state itself.'?"

To which Squires replied in 5 that there seems no reason why we should not make this reply at the first stage; and the force of the regress argument is that like questions must be answered in like ways.

Armstrong's a priori argument comes under fire in 1., as well. Armstrong rebuffed the phenomenalist's appeal to past experience with the band, on the ground that the band might now behave differently. But we can only know that the band-state is responsible for the manifestations on the basis of correlations between it or similar

states and similar behaviour. But this is a contingent correlation, and we have no guarantee that it will continue. So he is open to the same kind of attack that he uses against the phenomenalist. Curiously enough, Armstrong sees this point himself, but does not regard it as a problem for him. But his answer could also be used by the phenomenalist. He says on p.87 of his book:-

"I think we can imagine the possibility that the band should be acted upon by force F on different occasions, and behave quite differently on these occasions, although there was no relevant difference in the categorical properties of the band..... But it is only to the extent that we accept the Principle of Sufficient Reason that we can introduce the notion of disposition."

This last claim might explain why he argues in 4 that when a thing changes its dispositional properties, there must have been some change in its categorical properties. To say otherwise is to embrace an "ontology of potentialities," which is absurd. If a potentiality were actual and so part of ontology, it would not be a potentiality. This is right, but only in a sense. But Armstrong's own theory commits him to this absurd position. For, if a disposition is a state, then where the state is actual, so must the disposition be actual.

Squires argues in 5 that the distinction between conditional and categorical properties is suspect; and that actual does not mean categorical or exclude conditional. Things can have actual conditional properties. This is in reply to Armstrong in 4.

There is some unclarity about "actual" here. We need to be able to mark two contrasts. One is between what something can be supposed or imagined of wrongly said to have or be, and what it really has or is. This contrast, or one like it, is what Squires marks by the pair "actual" and "non-actual." Clearly we can now say that things can have actual conditional properties. Armstrong is relying on

a different, philosophical, contrast. This contrast is between the conditional properties, the dispositions, tendencies, potentialities, etc. of an object, and the manifestations of these things, the categorical, non-conditional properties of the object. If we mark this by "actual" and "non-actual" the conclusion that Armstrong claims to be absurd, can be interpreted as being absurd. A potentiality cannot be actual, in this use of the distinction. His own theory still commits him to the absurdity, so this is no help to him. More than that, he now has no argument against the "phenomenalist position." In order to convict the "phenomenalist" of this absurdity, he has to demonstrate that he is not using "actual" in the first sense, which marks the properties of all kinds that things have, as opposed to those they might be thought or imagined wrongly to have.

Armstrong's a priori argument turns on the question "What warrant have I for my statement?" (sc. that a given rubber band, if it had been subjected to a force F at T', a time when it was not so subjected, would have stretched one inch.) But the question "What warrant do you have for your claim?" is not at all the same question as "What is the claim that you are making?" Even if it were true that the only warrant available for attributing the disposition to the band is a categorical state of the band, there would be no ground for concluding that the disposition is the categorical basis. Crusoe's warrant for concluding that there was another man on the island was a footprint. It does not follow that Man Friday was ever a footprint. Perhaps this is frivolous.

It is not frivolous to ask Armstrong his own question. "What warrant does the Realist have for saying that the band is in the relevant state?" Clearly, the results of certain tests in the case of the elasticity of a rubber band. If those tests are not being applied at T', then the warrant for saying that the band is in

a certain state must be that certain results would be obtained if the tests were applied. So the warrant must be that the band has certain dispositions to behave. We put together the answers to the two questions about warrants, and conclude that a given disposition is a collection of different dispositions. And presumably all of them will be analysable in the same way indefinitely.

The mistake is to ignore the function or point of these words. Armstrong confuses the function of giving the backing for inferences with that of licensing them. No doubt there is a reason why each object responds as it does to various conditions. If the Principle of Sufficient Reason is a priori true, then there is reason for taking it that, if the properties of an object change - whatever sort of properties they may be - there must have been a reason for the change. But when I license the move from conditions to behaviour, I do not ipso facto state that my warrant has backing at all, much less do I state what the backing is. Neither do I ipso facto license any inference-moves when I attribute a categorical state to the object, even though the categorical state may be the backing for some inference-moves that I have licensed.

Leslie Stevenson's article is a defence of the spirit of Armstrong's account against Squires' attack.

"When such a connection (sc. between a causal and a dispositional property of an object) is discovered we are in a position to assert a contingent identity statement:- 'That state or property of b (the object) which is causally responsible for the dispositional property (1) (i.e. If Fb, then Sb) is (the same state or property as) Pb.'"

But this is not the same as the Realist account at all. The Realist account is that when such a connection is found we are in a position to assert that the dispositional property is (the same state or property as) Pb. And that does not follow from what Stevenson

says we can assert. On the contrary, what the Realist wants to assert is inconsistent with what Stevenson wants to assert. The state or property causally responsible for a disposition cannot be identical with the disposition. Nothing can cause itself - except perhaps God.

Coder attacks Squires' regress argument in 3.

"Finally, we can say what is wrong with Squires' particular assumption, essential to his argument, that if the categorical basis would make x (the object) exhibit B (the behaviour) in C (the circumstances), that is a dispositional property of the categorical basis. For ex hypothesi, that C obtains is sufficient to make the categorical basis do its stuff. And just as we do not say 'Human beings are liable to get wet, if immersed in water,' so we should not say 'Categorical bases are prone to exert their powers under the relevant circumstances.' For as water is sufficient within its ambit, relevant circumstances are enough to spur a categorical basis to act."

Perhaps it is worth pointing out that there is a legitimate question why human beings - or anything else - gets wet if immersed in water. It is not legitimate if "getting wet" simply means "being immersed in water." But it can be interpreted in such a way that not everything gets wet if immersed in water. "Getting wet" here means roughly "absorbing water" or "retaining a film of water on its surface when it is removed from the water."

The explanation requires reference to rather esoteric points about surface tension. But it is available.

Squires' answer in 5 is:-

"Certainly, if the categorical basis is referred to in such a way that it follows that it would spur the object to do its stuff, then it is silly to ask for a causal explanation why it would do so. It would be like asking why a bachelor is unmarried. However, such questions are sensible when there are alternative ways of picking out the same subjects which do not entail the application of the relevant properties. For example, we need to explain why a particular person is unmarried."

(But it is not just the phrase "categorical

basis" that needs to be filled in if we are to get a sensible question from "Categorical bases are prone to exert their powers under the relevant circumstances." "State A is prone to exert its powers under the relevant circumstances" is also empty. There can be no question "Why?" here either. We need to specify what the powers are powers to do, and what the relevant circumstances are.)

But Squires' reply, though valid against Coder, may seem to undermine his own regress argument. For it now seems that the only conditions under which the demand for further explanation of these connections is not proper is when the subjects of enquiry are picked out in ways that entail the relevant dispositional properties or entail that the relevant events occur. But this opens all causal explanations to the same demand, and leads to an infinite regress. The force of Coder's argument is that this is absurd, and so must be wrong. What is not clear is just how, on Coder's account, the regress of explanation is to be stopped. It is not satisfactory to appeal to some stage at which the connection between the state and the behaviour is analytic. For the vacuity at that stage then infects all the earlier stages.

The problem that Coder has raised is a different one. Whether there is an infinite regress of possible explanation or not, and, if there is, whether it is vicious or benign, are questions that will need to be answered whether Armstrong's account of dispositions is accepted or not. If Squires' regress argument is valid, then either there is a regress generated by Armstrong's account which is avoided by rejecting that account, or the regress of explanation is vicious if Armstrong's account is accepted, and benign if it is not accepted. I shall argue that the latter is the case.

On Armstrong's account, we make no progress with our questions. Each question in the regress is the same question as the last.

It appears that no question can ever be answered. If we reject Armstrong's account, then at least each question is a new question. It is "about" something different. So we do make some sort of progress.

The crucial move in Squires' argument is the creation of the new dispositional property. But (as he points out) the disposition of the state A to cause the object to behave in the relevant ways is "suspiciously similar" to the disposition to behave in the relevant ways. Moreover, the state A that causes the behaviour is the disposition to behave. So when we ask why state A should be prone to cause the behaviour, we are asking why the disposition should cause the behaviour. But that is clearly an empty question. It is empty to ask why brittleness causes shattering; it is not even quite obvious that it makes sense. But it is clearly both significant and not empty to ask why state A causes shattering.

Armstrong may reply that it is not legitimate to substitute one description for another in this way. But then we must ask what his notion of identity amounts to. Certainly it cannot be the ordinary one.

I have argued that belief statements are more like categorical statements than disposition statements, at least in their role as explanations. I have contrasted the roles of disposition and categorical words in explanations. There are ways in which disposition statements may carry some explanatory force. But these are not the ways that belief statements carry their explanatory force. Armstrong's account of dispositions will not save the day. It is inadequate as an account of disposition words, even if it did give an answer to my question. But the argument cannot be quite complete without a clear explanation of the way in which belief statements carry their explanatory force. Only then will the contrast stand out without a covert appeal to intuition.

4. The disposition account in context.

In spite of its deficiencies, disposition theory has a part, and an important part, of the truth. If it is set in its context, then we can begin to assess what truth it has. In this section I shall argue that disposition theory does have a role or a use. It will then be possible to state more clearly just what it fails to do.

The position can be outlined in the following way. Disposition theory of belief seems to have two kinds of support. One is by elimination.

i) Occurrence theories of the traditional kind cannot be right.

ii) Disposition theory is the alternative.

So belief is a disposition to behave.

The other source of support is more direct.

i) There must be close logical connection between beliefs and actions.

ii) The only plausible connection is of a (semi-) hypothetical kind.

So beliefs must be dispositions to act.

The arguments that I have presented do create difficulties for anyone who wishes to assert the conclusion. But they do not show that there is any weakness in the reasons that were advanced in favour of it, in particular, they do not show that the statements (i) are false or unsound. But the position cannot be left like that. I seem to be accepting the premise and rejecting the conclusion. I shall reject the statements (ii). But I accept that disposition theory does have a point.

The opposition takes it to be the case that they have proved that belief cannot be defined or analyzed as a disposition to behave, on the grounds that one cannot infer from an action or collection of actions to a belief statement (and a wish

statement) or vice versa and on the related ground that the difficulties in the way of writing out the disposition that belief is, seem insuperable. Hence belief is not a disposition to behave. However this is going too quickly. One must, I believe, agree that the two grounds are established. It is far from clear that the conclusion follows from them.

The arguments in chapter 1 show that the dispositional analysis of belief would have to be very complicated. Yet they do not compel us to abandon it, since they do not attack the arguments that originally established it. To every complication the dispositionalist can appeal to other actions of the agent, or to what the agent would do under other conditions. He cannot stop the complications multiplying. But nothing in the argument against him gives any ground for abandoning the point that the anti-Dualists were most concerned to make, namely that beliefs cannot exist in a world of their own, but must be discoverable in this, public world. Both sides seem to accept that there is a connection of some kind between belief and action. The quarrel is about what sort of connection it is. The opposition have a purely negative thesis, and the one great failing of attacks on the disposition theory has been the poverty of proffered alternatives.

It is prima facie absurd to deny that, if the gardener in my earlier example sprays the roses, his beliefs about greenfly and his wishes [~~and his wishes~~] about the roses are connected in some way with his action. Equally, one must admit that actions provide evidence of some kind for assertions about what people believe (and want). The debate hitherto has turned on the fact that conclusive evidence is rarely or never obtainable. The step from "spraying the roses" to "believes thus and so" is not like the step from "is unmarried" to "is a bachelor." But then, neither is the step from "shattered" to "is brittle" like the logical move. (Nor will complicating the cases with more criteria make them into

logical moves of this paradigm kind.) The arguments do give grounds for saying that the step from "is spraying the roses" to "believes thus and so" is not like the step from "shattered" to "is brittle" either. The puzzle is, then, to explain how we can make steps of this kind, how belief statements are grounded.

In its assertion that belief is not a disposition to behave because it cannot be written out in dispositional form, the opposition has missed some important points about the theory. It is taken for granted that the theory is given as the "meaning" or "analysis" of belief. But neither Ryle nor Wittgenstein claim to be explaining meanings or giving analyses. It is not surprising that the argument has not impressed holders of disposition theory. The puzzle is to explain just what disposition theory does do.

The first step is to recall the philosophical circumstances in which disposition theory of belief was propounded. It is as much a denial as an assertion. It is concerned at least as much to exclude apparent alternatives as to assert anything in their place. These alternatives were, of course, the traditional Dualist theories. The statements (i) on p.52 were derived in opposition to them, and seemed to yield the conclusion. The arguments backing the statements (i) relied heavily on problems about criteria for belief-statements, and it is in this context that disposition theory finds its home. The difficulties about it arise because the second limb of explanation, of the point of the statements once you have got them, was neglected.

The question "How do we tell that...?" loomed large for those who propounded the disposition account of belief. Consider the private language argument in "Philosophical Investigations," e.g. Pt.I sect 258 ff., 269, etc. Especially in section 293, Wittgenstein elaborates the "beetle-in-the-box" analogy, and in 258 ff., he gives the

"diary argument." Both of these involve an appeal to the question "How could one tell?" that this or that was the same. Here is one kind of reason for the claim that belief is a disposition to behave. Wittgenstein did see this. He considers in Pt. II, x:-

"This is how I think of it: believing is a state of mind. It has duration, and independently of the duration of its expression in a sentence, for example. So it is a kind of disposition of the believing person. This is shown me in the case of someone else by his behaviour and by his words..."

His objections seem to centre on the difficulties raised for behaviourism by the question "How do I discover what I believe?" As he says, "My own relation to my words is wholly different from other people's." But he does not question the validity of the argument. A person's beliefs are shown to me by his behaviour - including what he says. So belief is a disposition to behave. Apart from Wittgenstein's objection we still do not have an account of what it is that is discovered. What is missing is an acceptable account of the point or use of the word when we can apply it. This is a crucial weakness in the standard behaviourist position. And this point does not turn on the special features of first-person use.

I should like to introduce a doctrine from J. Kovesi's book "Moral Notions." He says on p.4:-

"Certain qualities must be present in a piece of furniture in order that we should be able to call it a table, but there is no strict rule as to what these qualities must be. There are various ways of making tables, and we can use various materials. On the other hand, not just anything will qualify as a table. Our reasons for having tables constitute, as it were, the guiding principle for deciding what are tables and what are not, or what new constructions will be accepted as tables.

"I would like to introduce here two technical terms borrowed from Aristotle, form and matter....

"The very fact that the material elements are unspecified and may vary, calls for the introduction of the term 'form'.

An answer to the question why we call a large variety of objects 'tables' and refuse the word to other objects gives what I want to call the form of a table.

"I intend to use these terms not only when we analyze our notions of objects but also in our analysis of human actions. We can commit murder in a great variety of ways. It is the material element of an act of murder that someone drives a knife into his victim's heart, or administers poison, or strangles him, or pushes him over a cliff. Human ingenuity may increase this list, and we may never be able to give a complete enumeration of the ways one can murder someone. What makes these pieces of human behaviour into acts of murder is what I call the form of murder, i.e. that we intentionally take the life of someone who is innocent, with the aim of personal gain or satisfaction."

This distinction does not apply to all objects. In fact there must be some things that do not have formal elements. Otherwise there could be no specification of material elements. There is no necessity that all words should be either simple words as colour-words, or words only one level above them. This applies particularly to action. "Murder" has a formal element. The material element might be "driving a knife into his victim's heart." But this action too has both formal and material elements. All that is required is that at some point we should be able to specify material elements without reference to a formal element. Nor is it necessary that words should give only formal elements or material elements. Many terms are mixed. "Driving a knife into his victim's heart" is one. "Ladder" is another. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "ladder" as:-

"Set of steps (called rungs) inserted usu. in two uprights of wood or metal or in two cords to serve as (usu. portable) means of ascending building etc."

One serious difficulty about this appears as soon as we ask just what our reasons for having things are. For some objects, it is comparatively easy to answer. A pedometer is "a device for estimating distance travelled on foot by recording the number of

steps taken." (C.O.D.) A boat, I presume, is intended to provide transport across stretches of water. And so on. But what are our reasons for having tables? Or crowbars? Our reasons for having things may well not be clear-cut. Or there may be many different reasons.

Another difficulty is raised when we ask how we are to decide what the reason for having something is. Suppose we say that a ladder is a means of climbing up to places that we cannot reach without an aid of some sort. But now, is anything that is in fact used for such a purpose to be a ladder? A chair, or a rope? Would a screwdriver that we used (whether once or regularly) as a lever or crowbar, thereby become a lever or crowbar? Surely not. It is not easy to see how we are to distinguish the intended or proper use of something, or that use which gives us our reason for having it, from a temporary use or a misuse - a use per accidens, so to speak.

Kovesi claims that all this has some relevance to what Wittgenstein had to say about family resemblances. See, for example, "Philosophical Investigations" Pt.I sect. 62, 67. Sect. 62 is some evidence that Wittgenstein did think of Kovesi's point, but was not very impressed.

On p.21 of "Moral Notions", Kovesi says:-

"When I claim that we do not need to look for empirical similarities between various instances of the same thing or same act in order to explain why they are instances of the same, I am suggesting something more radical than what I understand Wittgenstein to be suggesting when he said that we find a 'family resemblance' among the various instances or examples of the same thing. He is still looking for empirical similarities between A and Z though it is not one thread that runs from A to Z. A, B and C are connected by one similarity, B, C and D by another and so A is linked to Z though they do not look alike at all. The similarities are connected like threads in a rope. The family resemblances between various games illustrate this picture well. But I do not see any foundation for a claim that we call both football and chess

games because football is played with a ball, and so is tennis, while tennis is played by two people, and so is chess. Not only is this insufficient to explain that connection between football and chess which makes both of them games but this way we could connect everything to everything else. We could turn off at a tangent at any similarity and what we would get in the end would not be a rope but a mesh. Balls - cannonballs - were used to bombard cities, and duelling is a matter for two people. What we need to understand the notion of a game is what I call the formal element."

I do not disagree with the comment about games; but this is no more than the comment that "games do not have anything in common" - a comment that has been made before. Kovesi has not overthrown the family resemblance thesis. It re-appears after his distinction, and in two ways. Apparently, the formal element of an object is some kind of (non-empirical, non-observable) similarity between things. But this is not obviously true. The distinction as originally drawn allows for formal elements not to be similarities. Our reasons for having things may well not be a similarity between them. For example, is it clear that an answer to the question why we call a large variety of objects "tables" - an answer of the kind Kovesi suggests - will give a similarity between the objects, or even that there will be just one answer? The application of the family resemblance thesis to empirical similarities does not seem to be in question. But the distinction between empirical and non-empirical similarities is not very clear. I doubt whether it can be made clear. But even if it were made clear, the family resemblance thesis would apply to both kinds of similarity. Wittgenstein was concerned with similarities in general. If he discussed mainly empirical similarities, it was these that mainly concerned his opponents.

Kovesi's claim to have evaded the family resemblance thesis is further weakened by his allowing on p.5 that the formal element is not always final, clear-cut and definable. It is not

only that our reasons for having the relevant kinds of object are as vague and manifold as the material elements that go to make them up. Are tables really only to be used sitting? Not in a workshop. What height is a table? Coffee-table height? Dining-table height? Nor are tables the only flat surfaces at convenient heights. Counters in shops, shelves, desks are as well. In fact, Kovesi picked a rather poor example to introduce his distinction. An instrument or tool with a narrower range of uses would have served better.

Nor does Kovesi evade the thesis by appealing to the notions of "same" and "following a rule." Wittgenstein rejected the idea that we could find here some firm ground for explaining what universals are. This was part of the argument for the family resemblance thesis.

Finally, Kovesi objects that, if the family resemblance thesis is accepted, we could extend distinctions and classifications in different ways and connect anything with anything else. But this is not really an objection at all. One of Wittgenstein's points here is precisely that we have to learn how we do in fact extend them, and there is nothing that determines in advance what we do. Certainly there is no kind of a priori compulsion, open to specifically philosophical investigation. Knowing how to use a word and being able to extend and adapt it is a matter of being au fait with a way of life, and with the relevant practices and activities, not of following some rule that determines everything in advance.

How does this throw light on philosophical questions about belief? It enables us to see clearly both that there are two distinct questions and how they are related. But the application to belief is not straightforward. First, belief is not an artefact,

and does not obviously have a function. Second, belief is not an object. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some rather illuminating analogies.

The first difficulty can be met by talking of the functions or points or roles of words instead of the functions of objects. We cannot ask what the function or point of a poison is. We can ask what the function or point of the word "poison" is. The answer is given by explaining why the distinction that we draw between poisonous and non-poisonous substances is of such vital interest to us. This explanation is analogous to the explanation of the function of an artefact.

A rather different example is that of a goal. What counts as a goal is not determined simply by the events that constitute it, but also by the rules of the game. An explanation of the point of scoring a goal is clearly distinct from an explanation of the criteria for saying whether a goal has been scored. One could know the one without knowing the other. This distinction is closely analogous to the distinction between the function of an object and its "material elements." There is a difference in that one might be able to answer one question about goals without being able to answer the other. But, as Kovesi says, understanding our reasons for having tables is essential even to being able to identify them. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the criteria for saying when a goal has been scored and the point of scoring a goal. Although it is the rules that give the criteria, they have been drawn up with an eye to the consequences of scoring a goal and the effect they will have on the game, and the way it is played. It is fairly clear what the constituents or material elements of poisons and goals are to be, how and why the

scheme applies. But since it is not clear what could be meant by asking for the constituents or material (!) elements of belief, it is not clear how the scheme could be applied.

The example of goals can help. Goals must be explained within their context. The idea that "we play games with words" suggests that belief, too, should be explained in the same sort of way. But there is a glaring difference. In explaining goals we ask about goals, not about the word "goals." But this difference should not put us off. For it is the words themselves that we are playing with in the case of belief. Football is not played with words. So the question "What is the point, the role of the word "believes?" is parallel to the question "What is the point of goals (in football)?" The question is answered by explaining the way(s) in which goals enter into football, or the part they play in it. Explaining this will involve showing how the game would be different without goals. We can treat the question about "believes" in a similar way.

There are three points behind my extension of this scheme to philosophical questions about belief. First, the notion of a formal element need not be simply the notion of a function or a purpose, or even of a reason for having something. At its widest, it can be taken to cover any explanation of the part that something plays in our lives. Second, the scheme can be applied to things that we do not choose to have, like poisons. But the question needs to be changed somewhat into a question about words - which we do in some sense choose to have. Third, the change in the question does not destroy the usefulness of the scheme. The point remains essentially the same as it was originally.

The suggestion that this distinction between

material and formal elements is of wide application does have more support. Sentences with a function suspiciously like that of giving the material elements of objects have been independently isolated. I refer to the distinction between "is" of meaning and "is" of constitution, which is widely, if not universally drawn. "Is" of constitution is exemplified by such sentences as "His table was an old packing case," and "Herring boxes without topses sandals were for Clementine," and "A cloud is a mass of water droplets or other particles in suspension." This sense of "is" can be identified by the fact that it is replaceable by such phrases as "is made up of" or "consists of." It is not important to the argument that the difference between this sense of "is" and any other senses be characterized in any particular way. These may not be distinct senses of "is", but rather different uses. What is important to the argument is simply that sentences of this sort do make sense. The distinction is drawn, e.g., by Place in "Is Consciousness a Brain Process?" and discussed by him there.

On the assumption that sentences of this sort are reasonably clear - though I do not pretend that there are no problems about them - I can make my point about the disposition theory of belief. For the statement "Beliefs are dispositions to behave" shares many peculiarities with constitutional "is" or sentences giving material elements. The resemblances are close enough to justify asserting that "Beliefs are dispositions to behave" is a kind of sentence expressing material elements.

The similarities are the following. Material elements are left unspecified. They may vary from case to case. There is no general way of saying what they are. There is no general way of saying what actions may and what actions may not

count as assassinating the President. In the same way, different people may act on the same belief in different ways. But, just as we may expect that an assassination will be a violent act - though we may be wrong - so we do form expectations about what people will do in the light of a given belief. Again, in a given case, we have no doubt which action it was that counted as assassinating the President, or which action showed someone's belief that p. There is no logically guaranteed step between "He assassinated the President" and other possible descriptions of the action, such as "He fired a gun,"in either direction. Yet firing a gun and assassinating the President may be one and the same action. Some other description surely must apply to a man who has assassinated the President. He must have done something to kill him. The position is the same between belief and behaviour. That a man's beliefs must make some difference to what he has done under some possible circumstances is the weakest conclusion from the anti-Dualist arguments. The opposition's arguments show that particular moves between belief statements and behaviour statements cannot be logically guaranteed. But, if we keep the points about material element statements in mind, the conclusions do not seem incompatible.

Of course, all this raises a number of problems. Clearly the resemblance is not thorough-going. A belief is not the same sort of thing as an assassination or a table; and it is at least odd to talk of the material elements of belief. To put the matter at it weakest, the relation between sentences describing material elements of objects and sentences giving the formal element looks much the same whether they are used to identify (objects) or to ground (belief) statements. For material element statements also give grounds for applying terms. They do so only via the formal

element. Our reasons for having tables do not enable us to look at furniture and classify it. There is no rule yet for identifying tables. What the formal element does give us is a way of assessing possible material elements. Thus, if we are told that a piece of furniture does not have a flat surface, we can conclude that it is not a table, by considering whether or not something with a flat surface would be such as to satisfy our reasons for having tables. So the reason for refusing to classify such an object as a table is in fact its lack of a flat surface. This should not be surprising, since identification must be carried out by considering the object itself. It is, after all, the object that is to be classified. But the lack of a flat surface is a reason only in virtue of something else, namely our reasons for having tables. What I wish to insist on here is that the material elements are ground for classification, but are so only indirectly. In the case of belief, behaviour statements do provide evidence for belief statements, but do so indirectly. The puzzle is, how they can do so. What is the further information in the light of which we can make the move from evidence to conclusion, that is the analogy with formal elements? The precise role of "Beliefs are dispositions to behave" is not clear as yet. Material element statements, as so far considered, have been singular, and particular. It is not to be expected that general statements of this kind should be possible except by coincidence, or in virtue of empirical facts about the world. There is no necessity for objects to share any material elements in this way. But this is not altogether true. It seems very unlikely, to say the least of it, that anything could be a table unless it had a flat, or nearly flat, horizontal surface. If that is true, we could say "Tables have flat surfaces." To put the point in a general way, there are some material

element statements that are general in form; they will serve the purpose of directing our attention to those material elements that are relevant to the object's character as table or whatever - though this relevance is again indirect, and depends on the formal element. And this, I suggest, is the function of "Beliefs are dispositions to behave." Nonetheless, there is a distinction to be drawn here. For the brain processes that constitute consciousness, according to Place and others, do not play any part in identifying consciousness, and cannot be amongst the criteria for our applying the relevant words. It could be claimed that they might under some circumstances; but the fact remains that they do not now. On the other hand, the "material elements" that go to make up a table can and do play a role in our identifying something as a table.

In the introduction I pointed out that someone might be able to identify and even use a sextant without knowing how sextants are made, or what they are made of. Yet it seems one must know something of what they consist of if one is to be able to identify them at all. Understanding the formal element is not enough on its own. The relation between formal and material elements is somewhat complicated. But it is clear that not every constituent of x can play a role in identifying x, even when a particular constituent is important in allowing x to satisfy the function or formal element. The intricate works of a television are important to its functioning as a television. But we do not need to understand them to identify and use televisions, even though they are important to it.

It is odd to apply the word "material" to dispositions, and odd to say that belief has material elements in anything like the way that an object does. But this is not what I am

after. The point is that the role or point of saying that "Beliefs are dispositions to behave" can be correctly understood as like the role or point of general statements about the material elements of objects with functions. If we understand the theory in this way, then it is adequate, but limited. The virtues of the theory are, first, that it is a rejection of certain possibilities. Second, the theory gives some answer to the question "What kind of grounds can we give for claims about what people believe?" or "How do we tell what people believe?" There is a very close connection between these questions and an account of the material elements of an object. This connection is what gives rise to the similarities that I am pointing out. But the inadequacy of the disposition theory of belief is that if offers no account of the "formal element" of belief. It does not tell us what is the point or role of statements about what people believe. It does not answer the question "What can we do with belief statements when we have got them?" This inadequacy means that the theory is ultimately inadequate even as an answer to the question "How do we tell...?" or "What are the grounds for...?"

If disposition theory can fruitfully be seen as at least analogous to statements giving the material elements of objects, my enterprise can be seen as giving the "formal element" of belief. I am concerned to explain the point or role of belief, to explain the reasons for having the word in the language. The comparisons and analogies that I am making here are not perfect. But they do serve to clarify the various questions and puzzles.

One may ask whether there is not also some similar way of "rescuing" theories of the traditional kind. Is there some question about belief which can be correctly answered by appealing

to some "mental act" such as "entertaining and accepting a proposition?" I do not think so. Theories of this kind must be interpreted as attempts to give "material elements" of belief, or to give the "constituents" of belief. This would amount to taking them as attempts to answer questions of the kind I identified third in my introduction. There I distinguished first knowing what a sextant is <u>qua</u> object, by being shown examples, second, knowing what a sextant is as knowing how to take a sight, knowing how to work out a position, and third knowing what a sextant is as knowing how it is made, what it consists of. If we take it that it was the third question that traditional theories set out to answer, we can say why the attempts failed. For not all x's are made up of anything, in the required sense. A mistaken general account of the mind led to the idea that questions that could sensibly be asked about objects like sextants could also sensibly be asked about beliefs. But that does not follow, of course. In the second part of this thesis, I think it will become clear that is possible to give some sense to the traditional vocabulary.

5. Beliefs as causal states.

One way of answering my question about beliefs - why it is (part of) an explanation of an action to say that the agent believed this or that - is to say that beliefs, together with wants, cause actions. This idea is part of the traditional account ofwwants or wishes. It seems likely that this answer would have been given about beliefs as well. At present there are two important varieties of this position. Some people would claim that beliefs cause actions, and that they are linked with, or identical with, physiological states of the believer. This seems to offer a way round many of the arguments levélled against the traditional accounts. But there are may difficulties in this move to physiology. Other philosophers have simply attacked the anti-traditional arguments, without linking mental states to physiological states in any very clear-cut way.

Armstrong's position is of the first kind. But his route to this position first passes through the disposition theory, and relies on his account of dispositions. So I shall not discuss if further.

One example of the second kind of approach is D. Davidson's article, "Actions, Reasons and Causes" in Journal of Philosophy, 1963. He is quite explicit:-

"In this paper I want to defend the ancient - and common-sense - position that rationalization is a species of causal explanation."

Davidson uses "rationalization" to cover all reason-giving explanations of actions - not just bad ones. He does not give a positive account of beliefs or wants. His tactics are two. He distinguishes carefully between explaining and justifying actions. Then:-

"If, as Melden claims causal explanations are 'wholly irrelevant to the understanding we seek' of human actions then we are without an analysis of 'because' in 'He did it because...' where we go on to name a reason.....Failing a satisfactory alternative the best argument for a scheme like Aristotle's (sc. introducing wanting as a causal factor) is that it alone promises to give an account of the 'mysterious connection' between reasons and actions." (end of section III).

Davidson's other tactic is simply to show that various well-known lines of attack do not succeed. In the course of this he says:-

"The laws whose existence is required if reasons are causes of actions do not, we may be sure, deal in the concepts in which rationalizations must deal. If the causes of a class of events (actions) fall in a certain class (reasons) and there is a law to back each singular causal statement, it does not follow that there is any law connecting events classified as reasons with events classified as actions - the classifications may even be neurological, chemical or physical." (Section IV).

David Pears in his lecture to the Royal Institute of Philosophy, "Desires as Causes of Action" in 1966/7 refers to neurology in a similarly oblique way. (See "The Human Agent.") And it is indeed difficult to envisage a plausible account that does not ultimately rely on neurology, chemistry, etc. We would hardly be willing to grant the title of "cause" to something that was not in some way amenable to scientific investigation, and that could not somehow be reconciled with the corpus of knowledge of physics and chemistry. We might be driven to extend or change the concepts we are willing to employ in these fields. But that does not affect my point. All this means that there is reason for preferring an account that does make a link with physiology to one that does not.

Davidson defends his claim that beliefs are causes of actions simply on the grounds that there is no satisfactory

scheme of explanation that might give an account of the way in which beliefs explain actions, other than a causal one. He admits that there is much that we do not know, but presumably the idea is that belief will become clearer with further empirical research. I do not propose to criticize in detail his attacks on the anti-causal arguments. His points are subtle and relevant; some of them are right. But he does end up saying some very strange things. For example, he points out, quite rightly:-

"Ignorance of competent predictive laws does not inhibit valid causal explanation, or few causal explanations could be made." (Section IV).

He admits also, later in the article, that the concepts that the laws will employ are unknown to us. All we can be sure of is that they are not the ones we employ at present to explain actions.

He cites in illustration the example of a window breaking when struck by a stone. Common sense may be ignorant of many of the concepts relevant to explaining why things like this happen. But there is no doubt that the connection between stone and window is a causal one. There is doubt in the case of actions.

Davidson seems to be claiming that in some way the explanations of action that we now give fit the schemes of causal explanations. If they did, surely we could not know in advance that any new concepts would be needed. We did not know that in the case of the stone and the window.

Even if we ignore this, Davidson cannot appeal to the as yet unknown physiological laws and theories to explain why an appeal to beliefs and wants has explanatory power for us now. In the example of the stone and the window, we understand a great deal about the causal relations between the two in advance of scientific

theory and investigation. It isn't difficult to see why an appeal to the stone being thrown answers the layman's question about the window breaking. But the appeal to beliefs and wants to explain actions is not parallel.

Davidson has not even answered the central question here. He has merely moved it. According to him "rationalizations" of actions have two strands, one of explanation and one justification. The strand of explanation is causal. The strand of justification is separate. But now the question re-appears. Why is it that some (causal) explanations include a strand of justification while others do not? In fact the question is not quite right in this form. Sometimes people do things for bad reasons. The explanation does not then justify the action even though it is of the relevant kind. We should ask, "Why is is that some (causal) explanations either justify or fail to justify what they explain, and some do not allow the question of justification to be sensibly raised?" Why is it that "Because I wanted to turn on the light?" may justify flipping the switch? Why is it that "Because it was wet," neither justifies nor fails to justify the match's failure to light? Yet the very same fact may justify my throwing the match away.

We started with a puzzle about two kinds of explanation, one causal, the other not. Davidson leaves us with a puzzle about two kinds of causal explanation. Is this really an advance?

Davidson appeals to "the scheme of causal explanation," as if there was one. He does not specify further what he means. But the words "cause" and "causal" do not have a meaning clear enough for us to grasp just what Davidson means. This

difficulty infects any attempt to resolve, or even to state clearly, these issues. Even without the complexities surrounding the notion of action, we do not have a clear and accepted account of causes to distinguish other kinds of explanation from. Arguments that turn on a particular doctrine of causality, or on exact criteria for causal explanations are always vulnerable to this difficulty. Indeed, many of Davidson's moves turn on the fact that this is so.

This much is clear, however. We are not entitled to conclude from the fact that we can explain actions by appealing to the agent's beliefs and wants that the "because" is causal. Nor can we argue that there is no clear alternative to the causal scheme of explanation, so that any occurrence of "because" must be causal. Both moves fall foul of the fact that there is a sense of "because" which is not causal. This is the sense of "because" employed in logic and mathematics. "The square root of 2 must be an irrational number, because....." "There can be no largest prime number, because....." These cannot be causal explanations. No-one will claim that our explanations of action are just like explanations of logical and mathematical facts. But this does weaken Davidson's line. There are two lines of thought about this that are very tempting. They both turn on analogies. One leads to what I shall call the disease theory of belief - and of other mental states. The other leads to what can be called the computer theory of belief. The names give the analogies on which the theories depend.

In the disease theory of belief, we could start from the premise that beliefs are dispositions to behave. But it is not necessary. It is possible to start from the premise that beliefs are not dispositions to behave. Even though belief is not a disposition to behave, it must be conceded that what someone says and

does is evidence for his beliefs. But we can and do put together things that someone says and does and draw conclusions about what he believes, even though the conclusions are always open to revision. Now this is not very different from what a doctor does in diagnosing a disease. There is a collection of symptoms which he puts together and from which he draws conclusions. But, as in the case of belief, there is no simple deductive relation between symptoms and diseases. But neither is the relation straightforwardly empirical. Where the organism or whatever causes the disease is not known, the job of grouping symptoms together into a syndrome is difficult and may be contentious. It is not often done by discovering what symptoms are caused by a given organism or chemical or whatever. Yet underlying this process is the idea that there is something that causes the syndrome. Perhaps there is here an analogy to be drawn with belief, and we can say what the role of physiological research here is.

There are powerful objections to <u>identifying</u> diseases either with the relevant syndrome or with the cause of the syndrome. Suppose we identify the disease with the cause of the syndrome. We do not say "Polio is the organism that causes...." We say "Polio is caused by the organism XYZ..." We cannot hold up a test-tube and say "Here is one milligram of the common cold." We can say "Here is one milligram of what causes the common cold." Someone who tried to sell an ounce of arthritis or a pound of rheumatism would not just be facing a certain market resistance. He would be facing a conceptual absurdity. Doctors, looking for the cause of a certain syndrome would not be able to say that they were looking for the cause of leukaemia, but had little idea what it was. They would have to say that they were looking for leukaemia, but had

little idea what it was. Their search is difficult enough, but it is not that difficult. Suppose we follow these linguistic forms and identify the disease with its syndrome. Then it would be no longer possible to complain of a doctor that he was merely treating the symptoms and not the disease. Treating the symptoms would be treating the disease. How could we explain what is wrong with merely treating the symptoms? We do not say "Polio is paralysis, etc." or "the common cold is a running nose and mild fever." We say that the diseases cause the symptoms.

Yet there is not a deep philosophical problem about diseases, whether they cause their symptoms, or are caused by the relevant organisms. There is no clear answer to the philosopher's question "What are diseases identical with?" But that does not mean that there is any real obscurity here. No more, then, do we really need an answer to the analogous question about belief. If diseases can float conceptually between symptoms and their causes, so can beliefs and the other mental states.

Moreover, this analogy will support only a weak correlation between belief and physiological state. The causes of disease and symptoms and syndromes are only sometimes correlated one to one. Sometimes one kind of disease organism can cause many different syndromes. Sometimes many kinds of disease organisms cause one syndrome. The common cold is an example of the latter case. And it may well turn out that cancer is an example of the former.

The analogy provides a tempting answer to questions about the conceptual role of physiological research. But it will not provide an answer to my question why it is now, in advance of research, an explanation of action to cite the relevant beliefs of

the agent. Nor does it support the claim that beliefs cause actions. Even this weak correlation is not plain sailing. At least one difficulty that came up in my discussion of the disposition theory appears here as well. To explain an action we must appeal to the relevant belief and the relevant want. Suppose we know that two physiological states A and B will cause whatever movements will turn on the light. Which is the belief and which the want? But even that is too simple. Any one action can be described in a multitude of ways. Certain of these descriptions can be organised in a hierarchy by reference to the agent's beliefs and wants. So there will be a parallel multitude of physiological states to be identified in any one action by the poor researcher.

The other line of thought and the other analogy connects beliefs and physiological states, not <u>via</u> actions, but <u>via</u> the objects of belief. The analogy is between the brain and computers. Information can be recorded in a computer. Any given item of information that is recorded in a computer memory can be correlated with physical states of the machine, which are caused or produced by feeding that item of information in to the machine. The information that a person has must be recorded, presumably in his brain, in some analogous way. The notion of belief covers misinformation as well as information. But computers can have misinformation stored in them just as well as information.

But consider how the correlation would go. When it is raining, a chain of events may cause certain changes in A's brain which we might be inclined to accept as correlateable with the belief or knowledge that it is raining. That is, a state of affairs, 'p', may cause a state that we would correlate with the belief that p. But this state may be caused by indefinitely many other states of

affairs. The belief that p may be caused by 'p' or by 'q' or 'r' or 's'. This must happen when A believes wrongly that it is raining. And so it follows that the state of affairs, 'p', may cause wrong beliefs, that q or r or s, and not produce the right one. Yet we could not proceed by picking out just that link between 'p' and the belief that p, rejecting all the others. 'q' may be evidence for p, or at least A may be entitled to take 'q' as evidence for p. And 'p' may be itself evidence for something, say 'r'.

It will not be enough to establish causal chains within the brain. We must be able to single out some of them as correct or appropriate. But there is nothing in the notion of a causal chain to base this on. Statistical correlation cannot be of help. Perhaps there are some things that people get wrong more often than they get them right. Illusions and trick pictures offer examples of cases where this seems to be true. Nor will it do to establish a correlation by examining "normal" or "healthy" people. General good health is neither necessary nor sufficient for acquiring true beliefs, although some kinds of ill-health are relevant. In this context, being healthy is mainly a matter of getting things right.

We can make these correlations in the case of computers. But we have a way of distinguishing those states that are correct from those that are incorrect. The software that goes with the computer provides a "translation" and the criterion we need. But we do not have the "software" of the brain. We are in the position of an archeologist facing an unknown script, not even sure what is script and what is decoration. Unknown scripts have been deciphered, but only with the aid of a translation of a sample passage, as in the Rosetta stone, or with the aid of pictures, as in the case of Linear B script. Nor is it easy to see how turning to what the subject does or

says could help with this problem.

Indeed, in one area where some progress has been made in bringing to light the physiological mechanisms underlying our mental life - that of the emotions - the relations between emotions and physiological states do turn out to be extremely complex. It is not a case of correlating emotion with physiological state. There is more than one system involved. And they react on each other in all sorts of ways.

Physiological studies of the emotions do tell against any whole-hearted rejection of physiological studies. It is surely clear that we do seek this understanding of the emotions. There are good reasons for doing so. But we find here another difficulty in the programme. Physiologists employ a set of concepts and classifications which are not those of everyday talk about the emotions. This may explain why there is not any satisfactory correlation to be found. It may be, indeed it appears to be the case that the two sets of concepts do not "match." What I mean by "match" here can be illustrated. There is a match between "notes" and "frequencies of sound waves." We can define the note A as having a frequency of 440 c.p.s. - or whatever. We can discover how many c.p.s. C is. But this kind of matching is not guaranteed. It turns out, for example, that there is no comparable match in the case of colours and light waves. So there is no guarantee that there will be any match when we come to beliefs and brain states. The complications involved in the attempt to discover one give some ground for supposing that we will not find one.

Still, there does not seem to be any purely logical ban on a research programme to produce a "translation" between physiological states and beliefs, following the computer analogy.

But there would be a conceptual absurdity in trying to give to physiological states the conceptual role of belief. It would be absurd to try to substitute for our present explanations of actions an explanation of the relevant physiological states. The two kinds of statement have different roles in our language. Our present explanations are involved in justifying actions, both on the score of rationality and as blameworthy or not, and in describing mistakes and errors. The language of physiology is not adapted to these roles but to very different roles. We might adapt our language, or a part of it, to play different or additional roles. But the basic distinction of roles would still be there.

The fundamental point against any view that attributes to belief a causal role in explaining action is this. There is a conceptual absurdity in supposing that the belief that p is a state conceptually independent of the state of affairs, p. There are certain occasions when we are talking about actions when belief has no role to play, although we might have expected it to have a role if it were a state conceptually independent of the relevant state of affairs. In particular, explanations of action that appeal to beliefs are only comprehensible to someone who already understands the relation between the relevant state of affairs and action. "He A-ed because he believed that p" can only be understood by someone who understands "He A-ed because p." This claim needs explaining.

The first consideration is that belief has a feature that I call "transparency," following Roy Edgeley. In his book "Reason in Theory and Practice" he explains:-

"I call this feature the 'transparency' of one's own thinking: my own present thinking, in contrast to the thinking of others, is transparent in the sense that I cannot distinguish the question 'Do I think that p?' from a question in which there is no essential reference to myself or my

belief, namely 'Is it the case that p?'. This does not mean that the correct answers to these two questions must be the same: only that I cannot distinguish them, for in giving my answer to the question 'Do I think that p?' I also give my answer, more or less tentative, to the question ~~'Do I think that p?'~~ 'Is it the case that p?' " ..... " If I decide that p is the case, there is no further evidence, no further process, no additional decision that I need in order to satisfy myself that I believe that p is the case. For me, the question whether I believe that p is the case is not a question over and above the question whether p is the case. For anyone else it is a separate question, but not for me." (p.91)

This needs some qualification. I may believe something unconsciously. Presumably I would have to discover that in the same sort of way that I discover what other people believe. The point would stand even so in relation to many important and central cases of belief.

However, A. Macintyre in "The Unconscious" (p. 56/57) has the following to say about the relation between unconscious intentions and avowals:-

"Freud argues that certain types of neurotic behaviour are the result of unconscious motivation. The neurotic has purposes and intentions of which he is unaware. Since he is unaware of them he cannot avow them. Freud would seem to be using 'intention' here to refer to a pattern of behaviour. But an essential feature of psychoanalysis is the way in which the neurotic comes to recognize and to acknowledge the purpose of his acts ..... And unless the patient will in the end avow his intention, the analyst's interpretation of his behaviour is held to be mistaken ..... But the psychoanalyst means by a correct interpretation of an action that the patient would avow if only certain conditions were to be fulfilled."

Presumably the same could be said of unconscious beliefs. I am not well acquainted with the writings of Freud or of psychoanalysts. Perhaps what Macintyre says here is not universally acceptable. At the least there is a good deal more to be said, and Macintyre does say some of it in his book. But if "avowals-in-the-end" are important to the concepts of unconscious intentions and beliefs, then what Edgeley says

about the 'transparency' of belief is strengthened.

The transparency of belief has consequences when we turn to the relation between belief and action. If p is a sufficient reason for me to A, and I have to decide whether to A, it makes no difference whether I ask "Is p the case?" or "Do I believe that p?" For I answer both questions in the same way and at the same time, namely by deciding whether p. In that sense, the question "Is p the case?" is primary. There is a similar relation between the questions "Is p a (good or sufficient) reason for me to A?" and "Is my belief that p is the case a (good or sufficient) reason for me to A?"

If the questions were distinct, I would be unwise to answer the question "Do I believe that p?" and act on that answer. In general, it is the truth of p and not of "I believe that p" that bears on the success or appropriateness of my actions. The fact that I believe that p does not give me sufficient reason for deciding that p is true. It can give me no reason over and above whatever evidence there may be for p. Again, if the questions "Is p a (good) reason for A?" and "Is my belief that p a (good) reason for A?" were distinct questions, then my answer to the latter must be "In general, No." My beliefs may be false. At least, even though the belief that p might be some reason, p is always a better reason.

When I say that my beliefs are never good reasons for actions, I mean the fact that I believe that such-and-such is never a good reason. What I believe (i.e. such-and-such) may or may not be a good reason. But I act on what I believe, not on the fact that I believe it. My reasons for doing something are the relevant p's and q's, not my beliefs.

There is a second, distinct argument for my claim. To accept the idea that the belief that p is a state conceptually distinct from the state of affairs, p, is to

make nonsense of our practice in relation to orders, recommendations and the like. If this story were true, we could not make sense of a recommendation like "When the bullets start flying, duck." As it stands, this is perfectly comprehensible. Nothing is added by saying "When you believe that the bullets have started flying, duck." Whichever version I follow, I will behave in the same way. This naturally stems from the transparency of belief.

If the two recommendations were distinct, it is difficult to see how we could make sense of "Duck when you believe that the bullets have started flying." Wouldn't there then be a further question about what to do when the bullets really are flying? How could I tell which of these recommendations I should be following in a real live case?

Equally, if I were told to "Duck when the bullets start flying," wouldn't there be a further question about what to do when I only believe that the bullets have started flying? We could interpret that as a question about what to do when I am not certain whether or not the bullets have started flying. But that is not the question we started with. I am often quite certain about what I believe, or about what is the case.

When I give orders or make recommendations about what to do in certain circumstances, I specify the appropriate circumstances, not the appropriate beliefs. Beliefs are not circumstances that can be appropriate or inappropriate independently of the relevant states of affairs. When I give advice about when to duck, I specify the circumstances, namely when the bullets start flying. I do not need to refer to any beliefs about when the bullets have started flying. The belief that the bullets have started flying is not a circumstance that needs to be, or can be mentioned separately. More than that, if I do give a recommendation that specifies

certain beliefs as appropriate to some action, that can only be interpreted as an indirect way of specifying the appropriate circumstances for the action. If I say "Duck when you believe that the bullets have started flying," this can only be obeyed if it is taken to mean "Duck when the bullets start flying." Sometimes, an order specifying beliefs can be given and treated independently of the order specifying the circumstances for the action. But only if it is taken to be an order about what to do in doubtful cases.

There is a clear relation between orders, recommendations, and actions, and the reason for actions. Someone who ducks when and because the bullets have started flying has obeyed the order. Both conjunctions are needed. Someone who ducks when the bullets start flying, but does so because his shoelace has come undone, has not obeyed the order. Or he has obeyed it only in some Pickwickian sense. One obeys orders like this one if (and only if) one performs the appropriate action for the reason that (because) the specified circumstances obtain.

Someone who ducks because he believes that the bullets are flying and someone who ducks because the bullets are flying have both obeyed the order "Duck when the bullets start flying." It might be claimed that the man who ducks because he believes (wrongly) that the bullets have started flying, has not (really) obeyed the order. He might be criticized, particularly if he had no good reason for his belief. But he has certainly not disobeyed the order. If he had good reason for his belief, criticism would not be in order. So the fact that the bullets are flying, and the belief that the bullets are flying are not independent as reasons for action.

But "Duck when the bullets are flying" is primary for giving orders. "Duck when you believe that ...." must be taken as if

it were "Duck when..." This gives us another reason for concluding that, as explanations of action, the form "Because the bullets are flying" must be primary. The form "Because he believes that the bullets are flying" must be dependent and parasitic. My next step is to explain this point.

The concept of a "defensive posture" shows the pattern of formal element and material element. Defensive postures are not any particular arrangement of any particular elements, any more than tables are. What counts as a defensive posture is determined by reference to the reasons for adopting them, i.e. the formal element. What counts as a defensive posture varies with circumstances. It is different in boxing, in chess, in football and on the battle-field. It varies also within each activity. The boxer's defensive posture will vary between a very general all-purpose one, and particular postures adopted to meet the threat of a left hook, an uppercut and so forth. The general will dispose his troops, depending on the terrain and on the kind of attack he is expecting. But this kind of explanation of the concept could not function unless we can talk about what is appropriate to different situations. If we are to explain what a defensive posture is, we must be able to show what is appropriate in all these variations in circumstances. Once we have done that, it is not necessary to go on and show separately what is appropriate to the belief that one will be attacked in these ways. It would be mere repetition. After the initial explanation, we must go on to explain about training situations, precautionary situations, etc. We can explain later that someone may for a variety of reasons adopt a defensive posture when no attack is impending, and that someone may not adopt the appropriate defensive posture when an attack is impending. But these additional explanations are qualifications and elaborations of the initial explanations. In that way, they are parasitic on it.

There is no separate question about belief. Given

a description of the posture appropriate to some attack, there is not a further question about the posture appropriate to the belief that there is an attack of that kind impending. We must work by talking at first about actual situations, not beliefs about situations. Qualifications, about beliefs amongst other things, may be added on later.

Various things can count as evidence that someone believes that he is about to be attacked. But one piece of evidence that is specially important is whether or not he adopts a defensive posture. It follows that we must be able to say what a defensive posture is without having to mention the relevant belief amongst the circumstances to be taken in to consideration in deciding whether or not a given posture is a defensive one or not. If we had to introduce the notion of a defensive posture by reference to the beliefs of the defender, we could not use the taking up of a defensive posture as evidence for his belief that he was about to be attacked. We could not know whether something was a defensive posture or not until we knew what the defender's beliefs were.

These points apply to all similar explanations of actinns. First, explanations that use "Because he believes that p" are only comprehensible if the explanation "Because p" is comprehensible. If someone does not see the explanatory force of "He believes that p" we would have to elucidate by talking about what p is a reason for. If he understands this, he will not need a separate explanation of what the belief that p is a reason for. It is a reason for just those things that p is a reason for - if it is a reason for anything. Second, we can only appeal to what someone does as evidence for what he believes if we can introduce and explain descriptions of what people do without appealing to any beliefs. If it were otherwise, we would be in a circle. Descriptions of what people do could not be introduced without appealing

to their beliefs, but their beliefs could not be identified without appeal to descriptions of what they do.

There is a difference between introducing and explaining concepts and descriptions of a certain kind and using or applying them in particular cases. These arguments do not apply to particular cases when we employ the relevant concepts, but to the ways in which they might be explained to someone who did not have them. The force of the argument is that if these action-concepts are to be introduced or explained at all, they must be applicable at least sometimes without reference to anyone's beliefs, but by reference to the relevant situations.

This leaves the connection between the belief that p and the fact, p, rather mysterious. There is clearly a close dependence between the two in certain ways. But in other ways they are clearly quite independent of each other. "p" and "He believes that p" may well have different truth-values. They have different truth-conditions. The same is true of the explanations "He A-ed because p" and "He A-ed because he believed that p." It might be claimed that "He A-ed because he believed that p" is the real, expanded form of "He A-ed because p" which is shorthand. The fact that it is raining is neither necessary nor sufficient for staying under cover even if we add the appropriate want. But neither is the belief that it is raining either necessary or sufficient for staying under cover, even given the appropriate want. There are always indefinitely many other relevant beliefs and wants. This argument turns on a particular doctrine about explanation. And that doctrine is open to question.

Explaining something, according to this doctrine, is a matter of giving the necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of what is to be explained. Anything that purports to be an

explanation that does not do this is either a shorthand form, or an incomplete explanation. But this will not do. It leads straight to the regress of explanation that I discussed earlier, in connection with Coder's article in chapter 3.

But, with this account of explanation, the regress is vicious, because it will never be possible to satisfy the criterion for complete explanation. The doctrine is also implausible in other ways. Any empirical, causal, general law needs to add a "ceteris paribus" clause. It is true that when a match is struck, it will light. But there are other conditions that must be satisfied. For example there must be oxygen in the atmosphere, the match must not be damp, etc. We can never draw a line and guarantee that we will find no more conditions that may invalidate the law. If the exceptions are too many and too serious, we may have to give the law up. But there is no point at which we are logically forced to do so. All this applies both to the explanation "He A-ed because p" and to the explanation "He A-ed because he believed that p."

The reason for saying that "He A-ed because p" was unsatisfactory as an explanation applies equally to "He A-ed because he believed that p." The move to the form that refers to belief resolves no problem, and may lead to a regress of beliefs. But the whole problem is founded on a particular view of explanation that is not obviously correct.

Some of the mystery of the connection between the belief that p and the fact that p can be removed by an analogy. The relationship between these two can be compared to the relation between "That looks like X" and "That <u>is</u> X." But these points only hold for some uses of "looks like." See "<u>Sense and Sensibilia</u>" by J.L. Austin, Lecture IV. If someone comes into the room and I say "That looks like Fred," I

make a qualification that is withdrawn when I conclude "It is Fred." The two claims are independent of each other in many ways. They have different truth-values and different truth-conditions. But my ability to claim that that person looks like Fred rests on my ability to claim correctly that it is Fred. In the same way my ability to claim that Fred A-ed because he believed that p rests on my ability to claim that Fred A-ed because p.

Again, the relation can be compared to the role of "real" as explained in "Sense and Sensibilia" VII:-

"A definite sense attaches to the assertion that something is real, a real such-and-such, only in the light of a specific way in which it might be, or might have been, not real. 'A real duck' differs from the simple 'a duck' only in that it is used to exclude various ways of being not a real duck - but a dummy, a toy, a picture, a decoy, etc..."

My claim about belief is in some ways parallel to Austin's claim about "real." A definite sense attaches to the claim that A A-ed because he believed that p only in the light of the possibility that he did get it wrong, or might have got it wrong. But before this is anywhere near clear, a good deal of explanation is needed.

6. Actions and beliefs.

Some things are classified, not by the shape or appearance or other features that they have, but by the part they play in our lives - by their "formal element." This seems especially true of things that have functions, particularly artefacts and tools. It is not so much that these things necessarily have any one clearly defined function, or do any particular job, as that there are a range of purposes that they fulfil, and activities that they enter into. And this is not an accidental or contingent feature of them, but a necessary one. Some things are more closely defined in this way than others. Some things have only a limited function, while others have an indefinitely wide range of them. There is some problem about how we are to decide exactly what the function of a given object is. For these reasons, it is best to regard talk of formal and material elements as a schema that can be applied to our talk about these objects rather than an accurate representation of it.

There is no theoretical limit to the material elements that may satisfy a given formal element. Yet we do have expectations of some sort about the material elements that a table, say, or a spark plug will possess. For the material elements (size, shape, colour, constitution) are essential is an object is to perform a particular function.

Though there may be no limits in theory (at least in philosophical theory) to the material elements that may go to make up a spark plug, there are limits in practice. We can say quite a lot about what they are. Equally, given a spark plug, we can say a good deal about why it counts as a spark plug (and not as a nut). In both cases, we should have to explain how the object in front of us is adapted to doing the job(s) of a spark plug, and why it is not possible for it to

fulfil other functions. It is in this connection that we talk of the design of an object. In virtue of the empirical facts about electricity, metal, porcelain, the construction of engines (and another range of facts that govern that) we can specify what material elements an object must have if it is to perform the given function. We need not specify every detail but some specification must be possible.

Identifying such objects as tables and spark plugs depends on there being some relationship between formal and material elements. This relationship is established by the relevant empirical facts. These, together with the function, yield the design of the object. The design is simply a specification of the material elements that an object must have if it is to perform its function, as well as the way in which they are to be arranged together. The design will not specify everything about any given spark plug. It specifies only the important features of it, that is, those features that it must possess in order to count as a spark plug at all.

"Design" may be applied at different levels. For clearly there can be many different designs of a cup or a record-player, in the use of "design" that is commonest in every-day use. Yet certain things must remain constant, since they are governed by the requirement that the object has certain properties or constituents, namely those necessary to its performing its function. It is these that constitute the design in my use of the term here.

We can say how the object must behave, or give its <u>functions</u>, in greater or lesser detail. This constitutes (one kind of) formal element. We then have a large collection of statements, not clearly marked off, which together with the specification of formal element, place limits on what can (empirically) perform that function, or satisfy that formal element. These I call the <u>relevant limitations and justifications</u>, since we appeal to this collection of statements in order to justify our

choice of design. (But I can see no criterion for marking off the collection of statements in advance.) The design of the object specifies both what material elements an object must have, if it is to count as an x, and how they must be organized. Of course, the design may specify the material elements only sketchily or in great and careful detail.

But the formal element never determines everything. There is always a range of choices. This is a more complicated development of Kovesi's schema. I do not know whether he would accept it. But it is inherent in what he says. Some account of the relationship between formal and material elements does seem to be necessary. Just as the original schema could be applied to actions, so this development can be. Actions are events that display a conceptual complexity like the one displayed by tools and other artefacts, we may want to say.

It is characteristic of actions that they have a point. When I do something, there is an aim a want, wish, desire, purpose, goal or object inherent in the action. I cover all these words, without equating them, by saying that actions have a point. The statements giving the point of an action have the same role in relation to actions that statements of functions have for objects. It is not that every action has a further point ad infinitum, or to the Final End. The point of action is given in its description. It is not informative to state the point separately when the relevant description has been given. If I am shooting the President, and tell my co-conspirators what I am doing, it is empty to say in addition that the point of what I am doing is shooting the President. It is informative if they know only that I am loading my gun or aiming it. The parallel with objects is less obvious here, since giving their functions is not verbally repetitious. Nevertheless, insofar as a spark plug is defined by its function it is empty to say "A spark plug has the function of igniting the petrol/air mixture by means of a spark." The function of a

spark plug is given in its description as a spark plug. (Of course, such empty statements may have uses. Straightforward definitions have uses sometimes.)

The point of an action plays a role like that of the formal element of an object. More strongly, the formal element of an action is given by its point.

If, on a particular occasion, we know what a person wants, we do not know what he will do (at a lower level of description). This denial of narrowly interpreted behaviourism is supported by exactly the same sorts of consideration that led to the original distinction of formal and material elements. But, insofar as someone who wants something is and must be prone to do something about it under some set of circumstances, we do know something about how some of his actions will be planned and organized, what the formal element will be, or may be, when he acts. That does not mean that we know the kind of thing that he will do. We have to work that out using knowledge that is available to us from other sources. In the same way and for the same reasons when we know what a screwdriver is for, we do not know what shape, etc. it may be. But we are given information that is essential in working that out from other things that we know.

The material elements of actions are given by the various lower-level descriptions of the action. This account presupposes that there are some things that are not defined in the same way. It presupposes the existence of material elements that are not defined by reference to a function, a purpose or a point. So if we use this model, we must expect to find some events associated with actions that are not themselves actions. And we do find them in direct or basic actions. These will be discussed properly in the next chapter.

The descriptions build up in two ways. For one can

perform action A by doing B, or one can do B in doing A. One starts the engine by turning the key, but one raises one's arm in signalling a left turn. In giving the material elements of an action, we may give "lower-level" actions that are causally related to the action that is carried out. I kill a man by shooting him, I shoot him by pulling the trigger ..... I trim the sails by adjusting the sheets ..... I turn on the light by pressing the switch ..... Or we may redescribe the actions that "constitute" the action under a higher-level description. Thus I raise my arm and thereby signal a left turn, or vote, or volunteer. All these changes in description exhibit the conceptual features that concern me. So the distinction is not important here. Nor is it important that there are others to be drawn.

For belief sentences the story is a little more complicated. So far, I have done little more than repeat and amplify what Kovesi says. For my purposes, however, it is necessary to go in to the way in which this schema applies to actions in more detail than Kovesi does. The first part of the story is simple enough. An action is like a functional object. It has formal and material elements. In the case of a functional object, I argued that the two kinds of element must be related to each other by means of a design and the relevant limitations and justifications. This applies also to action. Actions have purposes and plans. The plans are related to their purposes by relevant considerations, which rule certain actions out as irrelevant to a given purpose, (limitations) and rule others (and ultimately one) appropriate to that purpose (justifications). These limitations and justifications are the reasons for the action. Typically, reasons are given by "because" sentences but we need to qualify these with "believes" because people make mistakes. As they are generally used in explaining actions, belief sentences give the limitations and justifications within which a person acts. There is more to it than that, but this is the beginning.

In ordinary language, we ask for the material elements of an action by asking "How was it done?" The possibility of asking this question of any action is very revealing. What it reveals is how little we know when we know that a certain action has been performed. A question like "How did you get help?" is only possible if one can know that you got help without knowing what you did in order to get it. That amounts to the point that one may not know what lower-level descriptions applied when you got help. Clearly, if I had to know those in order to know that you got help, the question would be superfuous. But there are all sorts of possible answers. "I signalled to shore", "I let off a rocket", and so on. The question "Why?" can have two sorts of answer. They are related in that they both require some account of the formal element of the action. "Why did you A?" may be answered by giving the point or purpose of the action - stating what the formal element of the action is. This often amounts to giving another description of the same action at a higher level. The other kind of answer to the question "Why?" is an explanation of the way in which the formal element yields the material elements of the action - what I call the plan of the action or the design of the object - and/or the limitations and justifications that are relevant. If I fire a rocket in order to get help, the precise course of the rocket does not matter, but its colour does - within limits. I can be asked, and can explain why, given that I (want to) get help, I am firing a rocket, by explaining what it is about firing a rocket that makes it likely that I shall get help by doing that, or that enables me to get help by doing that. This is the plan of the action, in my use of the term. One may also need to explain why one chose to fire a rocket, as opposed to using the radio, waving a white flag or using one of the other ways of summoning help. One may need to justify a plan of action. And it is here that we find belief statements necessary, since it is here that the mistakes of the relevant kind appear.

I explained in the introduction that there are two questions that may be asked about a philosophically puzzling word. One question is about the criteria of application of a word. The arguments that I have been considering have centred on this question. But the other question is about the point, force or use of a word. This is the question that I phrase as "What can we do with belief statements when we have got them?" (In the end these questions turn out to be interdependent, at least in the cases that I consider, and especially in the case of belief.) My concern now is the second question, and not the first.

I also explained that I found the analogy between words and tools a useful one, in the light of the doctrine (if it is sufficiently formalized to be called a doctrine) of meaning as use. But this analogy needs to be taken further than it usually is. If we want to understand the use of a particular tool, we should look for that job that cannot be done by any other tool, rather than the jobs that can be done by other tools. It is not difficult to find such a job in the case of "believes" and so to give an account of the "logical origin" of the word. This amounts to identifying conceptual pressures such that if we did not have a word like "believes," we should have to invent it. Briefly, this job is that of explaining actions. Consequently, it is a serious difficulty for disposition theory, and for causal theory, that it does not adequately represent the way in which belief statements explain actions.

The account of the logical origin of the word "believes" is simply that we need it in order to explain actions that involve mistakes of a certain sort. To put the same point in another way, without the concept of belief and its allies it would be impossible to describe mistakes of some kinds. For if we did not have the word "believes," we should only be able to explain actions by "because" unvarnished.

Consider some examples. A man is walking in the country. Instead of walking directly towards his destination, he walks all the way round a particular wood. We might explain this quite satisfactorily by saying that "He walked round the wood because it was muddy." And we do offer explanations like this one very often, where the wood actually is muddy. But now suppose the same situation, with the difference that the wood is as dry as a bone. The same explanation will not do. It would be "He walked round the wood because it is muddy; and it is not muddy." This amounts to self-contradiction, since one of the requirements of explanation is that what is offered as an explanation should be true. But we can avoid this problem nicely by "He walked round the wood because he believed it was muddy."

Again, suppose that Fred is afraid of bulls, but not afraid of cows. If he displays fear of a certain animal on some particular occasion, and it is in fact a bull, then "He is running away because there is a bull in the field" is a suitable beginning to an explanation. But if the animal he is running away from is a cow, we are in a quandary. We cannot say that "He is running away because there is a cow in the field; you see, he is frightened of bulls." But neither can we say that he is running away because there is a bull in the field. Once again, if we insert "He believes that..." the problem is resolved. He is running away because he believes that there is a bull.

This turns on the familiar property of belief statements, that the proposition believed need not be true. An obvious question whether the same kind of account can be given for "knows" which does not have this property has the answer, Yes.

Suppose a man at King's Cross station who intends to go to St. Andrews. We see him getting on the wrong train, say to Cambridge. Why is he getting on that train? A possibility would be that

he believes that St. Andrews is near Cambridge. But let us suppose that he does know where St. Andrews is and that his mistake is in supposing that the train he is getting on is the train to St. Andrews. If he knew it was the Cambridge train, he would not be getting on it. It is inadequate to explain that he believes that he is getting on the train to St. Andrews - though it is true of course. For that mistake could be the result of several other mistakes. "Knows" excludes the mistakes he has not made.

More important here is "He does not know that...." If we return to the man walking to, say, the post office, and suppose that he must pass through a wood, this can be illustrated. He will avoid the wood when it is wet, because it gets muddy when there has been rain. But we might find that as well as avoiding the short cut through the wood when it is dry, because he believes it is muddy, he takes the path through the wood when it is wet and muddy. The explanation of this bizarre behaviour is that he does not know that the path is muddy. We could say "He does not believe that the path is muddy," or "He believes the path is dry." But these are too weak, since in saying these the speaker remains uncommitted on the question whether the path is muddy. If we really did not know whether the path was muddy, there would be no problem. "Because that is the shortest way" or "Because he believes that the path is dry" would be satisfactory.

Of course, both words can be used in contexts where no actual mistake has been made. I need only claim that the use of them where a mistake has been made is fundamental to them. But I shall claim that mistakes are always in the offing when we use "believes" in preference to an unvarnished statement.

My treatment of "knows..." is perhaps unorthodox. But the idea that there is a close connection between the two is not

unorthodox. This account is compatible with the doctrine that knowledge is justified true belief, although it does not depend on it.

7. Some questions about the schema.

In this section I shall discuss three questions about the schema. First, the question what role the schema plays. Second, how accurate the schema is. Third, how it is to be applied in the case of direct or basic actions. Finally, I will discuss an objection.

I give here a quotation from an article by L.W. Forguson, "Austin's Philosophy of Action," first published in Archives de Philosophie, and reprinted in "Symposium on J.L. Austin" ed. K.T. Fann. This quotation gives a more complicated description of actions, and shows how elaborate the vocabulary that we use here really is:-

"There is the initial stage of the 'receipt of intelligence.' Action takes place in an environment, against a background of events and actions of other people. We generally act in response to some information (true or false) that we have got about this environment. Breakdowns often have their source here, as a result of faulty intelligence.

"Having received some information one must always put some interpretation on it, see it for what it is, or in short 'appreciate the situation.' We act as we do because we construe our information in a certain way. But things can go wrong here:-

'We can know the facts and yet look at them mistakenly or perversely, or not fully realize or appreciate something, or even be under a total misconception.' (from "A Plea for Excuses.")

"Usually, when I act, I will do so in terms of certain principles which I think are applicable to the situation. These may be either standards of right and wrong conduct or much more mundane principles. In any case, it is evident that merely having certain information and having 'appreciated' it, can't lead directly to action or even to the decision to act. There must be what Austin called an 'invocation of principles.'

"Closely associated with the 'invocation of principles' is 'deliberation.' I need not always deliberate before I

act, but whenever I weigh the 'pros and cons' of the situation - and Austin was careful to say that these need not be moral pros and cons - this stage in the machinery of action comes into play.

"Making our way to the top floors of the corporation, there is a stage where the decision must be taken whether to do it or not. And decision, of course, is influenced by the results of the other stages. The soundness of the decision will reflect the workings of the lower orders of the machinery.

"Having decided, however, we realize that there is more than one way to accomplish something in the light of the consideration thus far. Thus there is usually to be gone through some consideration of 'ways and means,' which is a planning of how and when to actually carry the action through. There must be some thought, no matter how minimal or even habitual, given to the practical matter of avoiding difficulties and choosing the appropriate time and means for execution.

"Finally, we move in to action. Actually, doing the thing - the most outward stage of the machinery - Austin called the 'executive stage.' Most of the verbs that 'name' actions are used in connection with this stage, and, of course, many of the possible 'breakdowns' occur here as well. In the executive stage, we must exercise sufficient control over the necessary bodily movements and we must take sufficient care to avoid possible impingements and dangers, realizing that the action is performed against a background of circumstances, including the actions of other agents, so that we successfully complete the execution."

First there are certain more detailed comments that I would like to make on this, and then there is a more general point.

The stages that are identified in this seem plausible enough. But the suggestion that they are to be found in all actions is wrong. For example, it is difficult to see why we should accept the suggestion that action always takes place in response to information about the environment. It is not always a case of information first, activity second. For example, B.F. Skinner allows that some actions are not produced by the "organism" in response to

the environment - "operant behaviour." Moreover, on a common sense level, it surely makes sense to say of someone that he wanted something and then set about reconciling it with his principles, and getting the information necessary to achieving it and so forth. Certainly, writers on "Management" such as I. Ansoff and P. Drucker, who discuss planning extensively, believe that the setting of aims and objectives does and should come first in the process. One can argue in support that, without some idea of what one wants, there is no criterion by which to select which information demands a response and which does not. Again, the suggestion that consideration of ways and means is separate from the weighing of 'pros and cons' that precedes a decision to act cannot be right. For very often accepting an objective means accepting also the costs and disadvantages (the cons) of achieving that objective. The famous "The end justifies the means" is making just this point. Sometimes the costs and penalties may outweigh the advantages and benefits of attaining the objective.

But these are perhaps points of detail. One might object that if we really went through all these stages before every action we would get very little done. One might also object that people do not often notice or betray their going through these stages. Perhaps we should say that what we have here is an account of a "full-dress" action, and that many, even most, actions show only an attenuated or simplified version of this.

But there is a fundamental misunderstanding in these objections. The account may look as if it were a history, as if the various stages could be separately identified. Certainly, there is sometimes a history to give, but not always. What we can always do is to ask the relevant questions. We can ask "What principles applied to this action?" whether or not the invocation of

principles was a separate stage or one that the agent was aware of. I do not suppose that Forguson - or Austin - fell into any of the well-charted Dualist traps. For one thing, Forguson explicitly says "I need not always deliberate." But it is not easy to avoid conveying the impression that this is a bit of history. The reference to "the initial stage," and "the other stages," the mention of "machinery" are examples of the way that this impression may be given.

It will not do to say that this is a description of a "full-dress" action and that it is not necessary that all these stages should actually be gone through. We are left with the problem of understanding how an action can be decided on without going through all these stages and without thereby being more or less thoughtless or irrational. Then we notice that the questions can be asked and the answers given even where the relevant stage has not been separately gone through. The conclusion that it must have been gone through separately, but unobservably, becomes almost irresistible. So we must insist from the start that a description of this kind is not a bit of history, but a way of ordering the questions and justifications that may be asked for and given for an action. This may seem mysterious.

It is instructive to go back to the parallel with functional objects. In discussing these, I pointed out that the notion of a design had a crucial part to play in our talk about these, in relating the formal element to the material elements of the object. To think that an account of the planning process of actions must be a bit of history is to make the same mistake as thinking that the design of an object must be an object on all fours with what it is a design of. But the design of an axe - at least in my sense of "design" - is

not an object that is conceptually distinct from an axe. We do sometimes produce designs, blueprints, plans and strategies which are objects separate from the things that they are designs of. But this is a convenience, not a necessity. The relation between design or plan and its realisation is not accidental, empirical or causal.

If a design or blueprint does not appear in the form of an actual car, then the so-called design was not a design of a car but of something else. If it appears nowhere and if nothing could count as the realization of that design, then surely it is not a design of anything. Equally, if we follow the design and the object fails to satisfy as a car - if the design does not specify material elements and their relations in such a way that the object that results is a car, - then the design was not a design of a car, but either of something else or not a design at all. The design is an essential part of the car, but not at all in the same way as the valves or the distributor. It is not a separate part that could be left out or changed independently of the rest. Designs of objects and plans of action are essentially involved in explaining, criticizing, and assessing both. But they are not independent items on all fours with what they are designs or plans of.

There is one obvious objection to my claim that this schema reveals something important about the notion of an action. There are in the language certain descriptions that are description of actions and never of (mere) events. The descriptions "He committed murder, insulted the mayor, borrowed money," can apply only to people and to their actiohs. But there are very many verbs that can equally well be applied to actions and to events, or can indifferently have people or things as subjects. "Hit", "Support,"

"Move", "Wave", "Fall" are all examples. It won't do to turn to verbs that can only have people as subjects. Not only would that exclude some cases of descriptions of actions, such as those in the last list, but it would also include some cases that are not actions. Blinking, coughing, turning on the light may be actions, but may well not be. If my view is that there is a distinct linguistic class "action-description", then it is wrong.

There is no simple syntactic criterion. We might be tempted to say that the schema applies where we find an 'event' whose many descriptions can be ordered in a hierarchy. Thus, John illuminated the room, turned on the light, pressed the switch, moved his finger. But this will not do. Descriptions of events can also be ordered in a hierarchy. We can work down from "The river inundated the farm," to "The water rushed through the buildings" to a description of water flowing, walls and roofs collapsing and so forth.

What distinguishes actions is not the possibility of ordering the descriptions but the principle that governs the ordering of one set of the descriptions. John moved his finger in order to turn on the light in order to illuminate the room. The schema is a more detailed and complicated explanation of the relation that is marked by that kind of phrase. It is this kind of relation between the relevant descriptions that makes a given description a description of an action.

The importance of purposes and intentions to the notion of an action suggests that there is here a criterion for distinguishing actions from non-actions. The way in which the descriptions are ordered is the fundamental difference between actions and events. The schema explains exactly what this difference is.

A very tempting formulation of this kind of view is offered by D. Davidson in a paper called "Agency" in "Agent, Action and Reason," edited by Brinkley, Bronaugh and Marras. Davidson says:-

"A person is the agent of an event if and only if there is a description of what he did that makes true a sentence that says he did it intentionally." (p.7)

One difficulty with any attempt to draw a line between actions and events is that the language does not help us. "Being an agent of an event" is not clear. We can say that the bleaching agent in the case of the bleached curtains before us was the sunlight. "What he did" is no better. Objects are also said to do things. Not everything that people are said to have done is what we would want to call an action. "Being responsible for..." would not help. We can say that objects are responsible for things. Uses like these may be dismissed as personification or otherwise non-genuine. But we also hold people responsible for things that they did not do. I unknowingly drop a bottle out of my pack while walking in the forest. The bottle focuses the sunlight on dry leaves and twigs. A fire starts. I can be held responsible. I should have been more careful. But we could not say that I burnt down the forest. If I had carefully positioned the bottle, this is exactly what we would say. I did burn down the forest.

This case may seem to be a counter-example to Davidson's criterion. Our holding Fred responsible for the fire implies that he did it, or that it was an action of his, something of which he was the agent. But there is no description of what he did that makes true a sentence that says he did it intentionally. But the implication does not hold. Our holding Fred responsible need not be taken to imply more than our believing that Fred could have avoided the fire happening. So James Cornman's use of this kind of case

against Davidson fails. (See his comment on Davidson's paper in the book "Agent, Action and Reason.")

But Davidson's criterion is impossible to work. The fundamental idea seems clear enough. For any action there is a multitude of different descriptions. There will be some that carry the implication that what they describe was an intentional action. Others will imply that it was not intentional. Yet others will describe it as an event. If there is just one description of the right kind, then the subject was the agent.

There are three problems with this. First, in Davidson's quoted criterion there are three places that will need to be filled out if we are to apply the criterion. We need to specify which event some person might be the agent of, and what he did, and to fix the reference of "it" in "he did it intentionally." Suppose we ask if John was the agent of the event of the light going on. Then we must turn to descriptions of what he did. It would be pedantic to object that we do not yet know if he did anything, and that consequently "description of what he did" begs the question. What did he do? Well, he pressed the switch, amongst other things. Does this "make true" a sentence that says he did it intentionally? Did what intentionally? The description "pressed the switch" is so far the only description of what happened which allows the question whether he did it intentionally. If he pressed the switch intentionally, we might accept that he turned on the light. If that implies that he was the agent of the event of the light's going on, then we have an answer. But it does not tell us whether he turned on the light intentionally, so it is of limited interest. (He may have meant to summon the lift, not to turn on the light when he pressed the switch.) In any case, "He pressed the switch" does not "make true" "He pressed the switch intentionally" - not by itself at least.

Perhaps we should be asking about the sentence "He turned on the light intentionally" even though that description is a new one, and so one that "it" cannot refer to. But that would not help. "He pressed the switch" does not (by itself) "make true" "He turned on the light intentionally," even if "He pressed the switch" were to imply that he did so intentionally. The criterion is unworkable.

Moreover, it is a regress. We want a criterion for saying when a person is the agent of an event because we want to distinguish between what he did and what he did not do. But in order to work Davidson's criterion we must already be able to distinguish between descriptions of what he did and descriptions of what he did not do. In applying the criterion to John's turning on the light we must know whether John's pressing the switch was something that he did. We must apply the criterion to the event of the switch being pressed. We have then taken the first step in an infinite regress.

Perhaps these difficulties are finicky and pedantic. After all, the idea is clear enough. But is it? What is the criterion by which all the relevant descriptions apply to the same happening? How do we know of any description whether it is one of the relevant ones or not? I pass over the difficulty that there is no word that is neutral between action and event, which is what we need here. "Happening" will serve. There is a more serious problem. The descriptions do not have the same truth-conditions at all. Sometimes, as in the case of "turning on the light" there are additional events that must have happened before we can apply the descriptions higher up the hierarchy. Sometimes, as in the case of "making the winning move," it is not so much additional events that we require as more of the context, in particular the social context, of the action. Davidson's idea will collapse unless there is such a criterion.

It may seem that there must be such a criterion. In the case of "making the winning move," it is intuitively clear that there is only one happening in question. But it is not so clear in the case of "turning on the light." We want to agree that when John turned on the light, illuminated the room, pressed the switch, moved his finger, etc., he has performed one action, done one thing, not many. Yet our intuitions are not always clear. Is winning a case in court to count as one action? Surely not. One might suggest one reason for saying that when John turned on the light, he did one thing not many. The descriptions can be ordered in a hierarchy in the familiar way. But this is not a strong criterion. It will give a counter-intuitive answer in the example of "winning the case." In any case, this will not help Davidson. At best this could only give a criterion for "same action." But Davidson needs a criterion for "same happening."

The truth is that the distinction between action and event is not just one distinction, but many related and different distinctions. To insist on just one distinction, on a strict either/or, blurs these distinctions. It isn't just that there may be half-way houses, as there may be in very many perfectly satisfactory distinctions. It may not be clear when I start at the face at the window whether my starting was an action of mine or not, as Anscombe points out in "Intention." J.L. Austin well illustrates some of the subtle variations that we may encounter in "A Plea for Excuses." He says:-

"A different way of going about it (sc. defending someone's conduct) is to admit that it wasn't a good thing to have done, but to argue that it is not quite fair or correct to say baldly 'X did A.' We may say it isn't fair just to say X did it; perhaps he was under someone's influence, or was nudged. Or, it isn't fair to say baldly that he did A; it may have been partly accidental or an unintentional slip. Or, it isn't fair to say that he did simply A - he was really doing something quite different and A was only incidental, or he was looking at the whole thing quite differently.

Naturally, these arguments can be combined or overlap or run into each other."

There is no criterion or mark or test here. But to look for one (or many) such marks is a mistake. The difference between actions and events is not like the difference between cows and horses or voters and non-voters. The difference is the difference between two language-games. The term "action" is one of a battery of inter-related terms that are used in a particular language-game. The term "event" is part of a different, though related game. The whole structure of the two games is different. And it is these structures that are really important.

Anscombe says of her notion of a hierarchy of descriptions that it cannot be more than "a device to reveal order" in the welter of descriptions that can be applied to a particular action. We cannot say more for the schema. We apply descriptions in a particular way and employ some different terms when we apply them as descriptions of actions as opposed to events. We play a different language-game with them. The game of describing actions involves some new pieces that are not involved in the game of describing events. Not that they do not have much in common.

The schema is incomplete as an explanation of the way that the hierachy of descriptions is built up. As well as the relation of "in order to..." each step must be justified by success in achieving the purpose. It is not enough to justify moving from "I pressed the switch" to "I turned on the light" that I press the switch in order to turn on the light. The light must go on and go on as a result of my pressing the switch. There are other complicated conditions as well. For example, suppose that I press the switch, which unknown to me is not working. But someone observes me press the switch and operates another switch which does turn the light on. I did not turn on the light. The observer did. Yet the

light went on as a result of my pressing the switch. And most descriptions of actions are "mixed." See the discussion of direct or basic actions below.

Many descriptions apply indifferently to full-blooded actions, their weaker brethren and events. But this should not surprise us. One thing in common between my shutting the door on purpose, by accident, incidentally, by mistake, etc. and the wind's shutting it, is that the door was shut. This thing in common may be an important point about the incident.

But there is more to it than that. The ability to distinguish between actions and events is an ability to classify "happenings" or rather to choose the correct way of treating the relevant descriptions. If there were no descriptions that applied to both, this more basic ability to describe "happenings" could not be acquired. We can only learn to play these two different games with the same pieces if there are some moves that we can make with them that are neutral between the two games - or rather, that are correct moves in both games. A child could only learn to distinguish between those happenings that he is held responsible for and those that he is not held responsible for against the background ability to distinguish happenings. He/she can only distinguish between what he is able to do and what he is not able to do if he/she can distinguish one thing that has happened from another.

One thing that distinguishes actions, whether intentional or not, accidental or not, from events is that mistakes and failure are possible when someone acts. These words can have no application in the case of an event. It is my contention that this is fundamental to the notion of an action. So it should not be surprising that there is in the language a way of giving the point of an action that allows for the possibility of not attaining the point, of failing. The phrase "in order to.." is one such way.

What is important about the schema is not that it offers a way of drawing the distinction clearly. There is no reason to suppose that it needs to be drawn clearly, or that there is just one distinction. What the schema does is to display clearly an important part of the game that we play with descriptions when we apply them as descriptions of actions.

Direct or basic actions are actions for which there are no "lower-level" descriptions that are action-descriptions. A classic discussion of these is A. Danto's article "Basic Actions," in the American Philosophical Quarterly of 1965. I do not perform direct actions by doing anything else. I just do them. There is no answer to the question "How?" asked of a direct action. I can say how I murdered my aunt but not how I raised my arm. But I can say what caused my arm to rise when I raised it - various events in my myscles and nerves. So it is not that there are no "lower-level" descriptions of my raising my arm. These lower-level descriptions are not action-descriptions. They are descriptions of events or happenings.

The existence of these descriptions is built in to the schema of formal and material elements. There is no objection to a description of material elements having a formal element built in to it. Thus "I illuminated the room" may have as material element description "I switched on the light." And "I switched on the light" itself fits the schema. But there must come a point at which the description would be something like "My finger moved, pressed the switch and caused the light to go on, thus illuminating the room." If there is no stage at which we change gear from descriptions of actions to descriptions of events, then we will be landed with an infinite regress of descriptions.

But this presents two problems. One is the question what the material elements are of the direct action of, say, moving my arm.

There are problems about candidates for this role, which raise the question whether the schema of formal and material elements really applies in this specially interesting case of direct actions.

There is a fundamental difficulty in even attempting to answer the first question. Clearly the answer cannot be given by descriptions that are action-descriptions. That has already been ruled out. There is also an objection to giving the answer by means of descriptions that are descriptions of events. The distinction between actions and events was originally drawn by pointing out that certain things can be said of actions that cannot be said of events. A description of events in "purely physical" terms is thereby barred from playing a role in the hierarchy of descriptions of action. What we need, and do not have, is a way of describing the material elements of actions that is not an action-description and not a description of events either. The problem does not become pressing except in the case of direct actions. For it is then that we need to change gear.

But our language does not allow us to remain uncommitted on the question whether we are describing an action or an event. We may be forced to make clear whether we are describing actions or events in the end, or in some particular context. Of course, there are very many cases where the line remains blurred, as I have pointed out. There is hope yet.

One way in which the line remains blurred concerns the status of the lower-level descriptions of actions. In some cases it is clearly right to say that they are intentional or done on purpose, etc. For example, I press the switch on purpose, intentionally, and turn on the light on purpose, intentionally. I want to press the switch because I want to turn on the light. But this is not always so. A man playing the "Moonlight" sonata on the piano plays certain notes by pressing keys by moving fingers.

But it is very odd to affirm or to deny that he wanted to move his fingers, that he moved them intentionally or on purpose. He may not know what movements his fingers are making. He will almost certainly not be aware of them. He will be concentrating on other aspects of his performance. He may be unable to make just those particular movements except in the context of playing that particular piece on the piano. So we cannot classify the movements of his fingers as full-blooded actions. Yet they are under his control. They are not mere twitches or incidentals in what he is doing. They are essentially part of his performance. So they are not full-blooded events either.

So the dilemma about describing the material elements of actions is a false one. It is based on a rigid application of the distinction that is not appropriate. It is legitimate to use the forms of description of events to give the material elements of actions at least in the present context and for present purposes.

The natural answer to the question is that the material elements of the action of raising my arm are the relevant events in my muscles and nerves and their result, my arm's lifting. I include both because to leave out either one or the other creates problems in applying the schema.

To explain the events in my muscles and nerves does answer the question "How?" It is not an answer like the answers given to questions about the action under higher-level descriptions. But it is an answer like the answers given by physiologists to other questions. Many explanations given by physiologists are not simply causal explanations. They are explanations of mechanisms that have functions. Examples are explanations of the movement of the iris in the eye or of the circulation of the blood. The physiologist's explanation of how the muscles and nerves in my arm work should be seen in the context of these other explanations. The operation of my iris or my heart has a function.

There are explanations in terms of reasons for what they do. The movement of my iris and the beating of my heart are not actions. I do not contract my iris or beat my heart. But they are controlled even though they are not under my control. They are controlled by the autonomic nervous system. The question that these explanations answer is not "How do I do it?" but "How does it work?" or "How is this function achieved?" or "What function does this perform?" Explanations of the mechanisms involved in sneezing, coughing, blinking are closer to the case of movements of the limbs. I do these things, and I can perform them as actions. They are under my control to some extent.

The events in my muscles and nerves when I move my arm are candidates for the role of material elements. But it would be a mistake to leave out the movement of my arm. We do know when somebody moves his arm, without physiological research or special equipment. The movement of my arm is clearly one of the conditions of the truth of "I moved my arm."

Indeed, it is not obvious that the events in my muscles and nerves have any place in the schema as applied to direct actions.

"I moved my arm" is true if certain things happened and if those things were the material element of an action whose formal element or point is given by the description. Sometimes my moving my arm is an indirect action. I may move my arm by lifting it with the other hand, for example. But when it is a direct action, the relation between the material and formal elements is too close. The distinction between them seems vacuous. In any case, it is precisely the relation between my wanting to move my arm and my arm's movement that is mysterious. The schema appears to offer no help with

this. The alternative is to count the events in my muscles and nerves as material elements of the action. Then the distinction does not seem vacuous. The relation between my wanting to move my arm and these events is like that between my wanting to turn on the light and my finger's pressing the switch. But what is the special magic about these events in my muscles and nerves that cause my arm's movements? One way of expressing the important difference is this. My arm's movement when I move it is organized and controlled, but it is the same as my arm's movement when it twitches or is pushed or jolted. The difference between a brick and a brick-shaped stone lies in the fact that one just happens to be that shape, while it is not an accident that the other is the shape that it is. The one may fit where we want it. But the other is constructed and organized to fit where we want it. Closer to home are the similarities and differences between a retreat and a rout, or between a march and a migration. There is little difference in the end result in either of these pairs. The difference is that one is an organized and controlled version of the other. When I move my arm the movement that occurs is controlled. For example, it will not produce undesirable side-effects, such as knocking over the gravy - unless something goes wrong. But a twitch or a jolt is not controlled. If my arm twitches something has already gone wrong, just because the movement was not under my control. It is a mistake to equate the movement of my arm when I move it with a twitch.

Control of our movements is not so much a matter of course as one might think. In many cases of indirect action, we have to control our movements very accurately. This has to be learned. The control of a musician over his fingers was painfully acquired. Nor is it the case that we can make the movements involved in a given action outside the context of actually doing it. This is why

a mimic has to practice pretending to carry a pane of glass when there isn't one or pretending to shake hands, or play the piano. Both of these points are obscured if we concentrate only on examples like my moving my arm (any old how) or my turning on the light. These examples are too simple to be illuminating.

It is not really quite right to talk of "controlling" my own limbs or my own movements. My relation to these is quite unlike my relation to the car I drive or the clay I mould into a pot. But there is no simple alternative phrase. The point I want to make is that it is not a matter of course that my limbs move in the way that I want them to move, that their movements are under control. As an action, my moving my arm any old how is so simple that it constitutes a limiting, special, case.

Direct actions are immune from certain sorts of failure. They are immune from the kind of failure that is catered for by "believes." If I do something wrong that is a direct action, my mistake will not be about the relevant limitations and justifications that apply to this action. But yet given that I want to move my arm, there will be relevant limitations and justifications that allow us to work out what is required - if we wish to. This immunity makes direct actions special. This is (part of) what it means to say that my relation to my own limbs is quite unlike my relation to anything else. But there are cases apart from this one where the schema has to be applied in the same way - namely in the explanation of other autonomic systems of control within the body.

The role of the physiologist's research is now clearer. Physiologists explain what (contingently) controls the movements of my limbs, in the same way as they explain what the other systems of my body are and how they are controlled. So picking out certain

causes of my arm's movement as special is not arbitrary. When my muscles and nerves cause my arm's movement, and they are functioning properly, my arm is under control. I do not say that this is a conceptual truth. The world might have been different in that the mechanism of control might have been different.

There is one objection that should be dealt with. It is easy to grant that the agent's beliefs and/or knowledge explain his actions, and even that they explain his actions in the way that I have outlined. But one may still baulk at the idea that this is essential to "believes" and "knows." Couldn't a passive spectator have beliefs and knowledge of what he was watching? Couldn't some belief be held, but never play a part in action? Surely we can imagine something like this.

It may be that this is an objection to the disposition theory. The dispositionalist's answer is roughly this. A spectator may well be passive and yet believe something. But the account is that belief is a disposition, so this is not really a difficulty. For a disposition may well not manifest itself. The point is that there are some circumstances under which it would manifest itself.

I am committed to the view that there is a close connection that is not merely empirical between belief and behaviour. My objection to the dispositional account was that it misrepresented the nature of this connection. So it is open to me to use the same defence here.

But there is more to be said. First, any account that claims an essential connection between belief and behaviour must surely include speech, including silent speech in the head, as behaviour. Saying something is not like non-verbal "executive" behaviour of the kind that I have concentrated on. But it is behaviour.

It counts as evidence for or against claims that someone believes a particular thing. Now, a spectator may be passive in the sense that he is not performing any "executive" actions, and yet be saying things, whether to himself or to someone else. Indeed, a belief may never be acted on, but yet it may be discussed. My claim is that "believes" is involved with action, but not just with "executive" actions. "Believes" is one of the battery of words that we use to describe thinking. I shall discuss the use of "believes" in this rather different context in Part II. Now, a spectator may be passive in one sense; he may even be silent. But if he is a spectator, he must be thinking, and in that sense, he cannot be completely passive. To be spectating is at least to be watching, to be awake, to pay attention, to concentrate. And so it rules out being passive.

It may be as well to try to state exactly what my claim is. "Believes" has a certain role in giving explanations for actions. (It has the same role in our descriptions of thinking. But that view will be defended in Part II.) Roughly, "believes" allows us to explain why an agent did something, or rather the limitations and justifications that relate the material elements of an action with the formal element, while also allowing for the possibility that the agent may be mistaken.

This possibility, that the agent is mistaken, is central both to the notion of an action and to the notion of a reason. It is impossible to avoid presenting the account as if "believes" were a complication or sophistication added on to a more basic use of "reason" and "action". It looks as if we have first the "language-game" or our talk about actions and the reasons for them and then add "believes" to cope with certain deviant actions. But that could not be right. For we could not recognize that deviant actions of the right sort existed

without "believes." Without mistakes of the right sort, there is no need for "believes". But without "believes" there is no possibility of picking up mistakes of the right sort. And the possibility of mistakes of this sort is an important part of the difference in use of "because" when it explains an action and when it gives a cause. In talking about causes, we do not allow for this possibility - that someone or something has made a mistake.

8. On wanting and intending.

"Believes" is only one of the battery of terms that have a special use in explaining actions. "He took his umbrella because he believed it was going to rain," is only adequate if we can take it that he wanted to avoid getting wet, that he took it in order to avoid getting wet, and so forth.

What I have said so far goes some way towards explaining how some of these terms are inter-related. But it is clearly incomplete as it stands. It would also be necessary to work out a similar account of "he wants", "he intends" etc. Such an account would also involve showing that both causal and dispositional accounts were not satisfactory. That would be a long project in its own right. So I shall not attempt it here.

Nevertheless, it does seem necessary to consider briefly whether certain accounts of "wants" etc. are compatible with my account of "believes" or not. I shall look briefly at the suggestion that wants or desires are causes of action, and that wants are dispositions to act in certain ways. I shall offer some considerations that may serve to show that the way that I have approached "believes" may also be fruitful in the case of "wants" and "intends." It is not easy to expand "wants" to an overtly hypothetical form. But since "he wants..." is often to be completed by a description of an action, giving what the subject wants to <u>do</u>, it is not implausible to talk of a disposition to act in the case of "wants." It may well be that "he wants..." always implied that there is something that he wants to do. In that case the plausibility of the dispositional account will be so much the greater.

But it is not obvious that my account of

"believes" is incompatible with a dispositional account of wanting. Indeed, my account of "believes" allows us to say that wanting is a determinable disposition and to say something about how to determine what at a lower level of description, the subject can be expected to do.

One might say the same of the causal account of wanting. But it would be necessary to interpret "cause" in a very liberal way. It may become so diluted that it loses its force. Certainly, it would present serious problems for an identity theorist. For my account turns on the idea that something that is not the case may yet be part of explaining action, and that "believes" is crucial in allowing this to be a conceptual possibility. Something that is not the case cannot be a cause or a factor in a causally determined situation.

Of course, the fact that a sample of water is not boiling may be a cause or a causal factor. But that is not what I mean. Suppose that if the water were boiling it would cause the lid of the kettle to rise. We may explain the fact that the lid does not rise by pointing out that the water is not boiling. But we cannot appeal to the boiling water to explain why the lid is rising if the water is not boiling. This is what we do in the case of actions by means of "believes." Perhaps sense can be made of this in a causal framework without diluting the word "causes" too much. But I find it difficult to see how.

Difficulties for both accounts are raised when we ask the questions that were crucial for "he believes..." about "he wants.." and "he intends..." These difficulties are not, perhaps, insuperable. But they do suggest that the same approach might be fruitful if it were applied to these terms as well. The questions were "What is the unique and unparaphraseable contribution of these

terms to our language?" or "What conceptual pressures would impel us to invent these terms if we did not have them?" or "Why is it an explanation to cite the agent's wants and/or his intentions?"

Of course we could say simply that the explanation gives what I call the formal element or the point of the action. But this is too easy. That does not give a distinct use for each of "he wants..", "he intends.." and "he has the purpose of.."

By implication, I have already provided a basis for answering this question about "in order to..." and "..with the purpose of.." We need a special locution here, as well as the straightforward descriptions for two reasons. The straightforward descriptions also have uses in describing events, and accidents and so forth. And the agent may fail. So there is a need for a way of identifying the formal element of the action without committing the speaker in certain ways. The speaker may not be claiming that the action is or will be a success or even that what actually happened (as opposed to what was meant to happen) had a formal element or a point at all.

So far, we might get by with "he is trying to..." But it is possible to plan or debate or consider actions without performing them. So there is a need for a way of giving the formal element of an action that not only allows the speaker to remain uncommitted on the question of success or failure but also allows him to discuss the action even when nobody is performing it or trying to perform it.

No doubt my schematic picture does not yet do justice to the complexities of our language here. There are many other phrases and turns of speech to be considered. "He did it in anger/obedience," and "He did it as a gesture/ritual," and "He did it

out of habit/malice," are but a few examples. There are differences between "trying" as in "trying to do.." and as in "trying out." "Purpose" occurs in many different phrases. "In order to" is not the same as "in order that" or "so that." But a sketch along these lines does emerge naturally from the earlier discussion. The general approach does offer some hope of introducing a kind of order into the welter of differences and similarities here. The approach to "he intends.." and "he wants.." would develop along these lines.

I do not think that "intends" is very often used in every-day colloquial speech. It seems to occur most often in pompous and technical contexts. There are two phrases that are used in ordinary speech instead. One is "I am going to.." as in "I am going towrite a book" or "...visit John" and the other is "I mean to.." or more commonly "I meant to.." as in "I meant to turn on the light." (I shall ignore the fact that the verb "means" is also used in talking about language.)

One striking difference between these two is that "I am going to.." clearly refers to something (I am going to do) in the future, while "I mean to.." may not. Another is that there seems to be some implicit contrast between what I mean to do, or what I meant to do, and what actually happens. This is not so when we say "I am going to.."

Anscombe says in section 1 of "Intention" that intentions need not refer to the future. I think that what she means to say here is that the purpose or point of an action need not be something in the future although it may be. She makes her point about "intentionally," which can sometimes be paraphrased by "in order to.." or "with the purpose of.." But there is a special interest in cases where "intends" and its kin do refer to the future, simply

because these words can be used to refer to the future, but "in order.." etc. cannot readily be used in that way. In this use, there is no paraphrase for "intends", which suggests that it is this use that is crucial. But there are two areas of obscurity about this. When I signal intentionally, my intention may be said to be to signal, to warn other drivers, get help or to turn right, get out of there and so on. When I press the light switch intentionally, my intention may be said to be to turn on the light or to press the switch, or to find the telephone. It isn't clear that one of these intentions has any special place. We might say sometimes one thing and sometimes another, or to refuse to single out just one intention. Some of these intentions are in the future and some are not. And yet, "turning on the light" or "finding the telephone" may be what I am said to be doing in the present tense, when I press the switch. The classes of present and future are not fixed in a way that encourages us to hope for any clear lines to be drawn. The other area of obscurity is recognized in sec. 26 of "Intention." There are the intentions embodied in "higher-level" description of the action, and those embodied in "lower-level" descriptions. Anscombe says that "higher-level" descriptions give the intention of the action, and "lower-level" descriptions give the intention in the action. So there is little hope of finding a distinctive use for "intends" in this way. But another approach does prove rewarding.

There are a number of activities that depend for their point on some future event, action or activity. Taking one's coat because it is going to rain ("and I intend to avoid getting wet.") sowing crops that one intends to harvest, and so on. Often the point of the activity will be some action that will be performed by the agent himself; sometimes it will not be, as one could argue in the two

examples I have given. But signalling a right turn is one clear example. Here the point of the actions is given by the agent's intention to turn right, and the desirability of 'displaying' this intention to warn other people. Another example is surveying or exploring a piece of ground. Here the future activities are multifarious. It may be map-making that is the relevant point; and map-making itself looks forward to the multifarious uses of maps. Or it may be building or constructing something, or taxing the population. "Practising" provides another example, whether it is a piece of music or a judo-throw. In suitable circumstances, filling the car with petrol, clearing one's throat, getting certain equipment out, sharpening knives or blades, can all be cases of "preparing", and be dependent in the same way on some future activity. In all these cases, the point of the action can only be explained by reference to something that the agent is not now doing, but something that he will do - subject to certain qualifications. It will be apparent that what I am after here is the same, or at least owes much to, Ryle's identification of "intention-parasitic" verbs in "Thinking and Reflecting."

In this kind of case, we cannot give the point of the activity by redescribing it. Clearing one's throat is not speaking, signalling is not turning right, practising is not performing. Nor yet will a straightforward prediction do. The agent may never get around to performing the relevant future action, for one reason or another. But we need to be able to say what the point of his actions is all the same. Another use of "intends," related to this one, is what Austin, in "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," refers to as a "bracketing effect."

"When the till-dipper claims that he intended all along to put the money back, what he is claiming is that his action - the action that he was engaged upon is to be judged as a whole, not just a part of it carved out of the whole."

Austin's point is right, but I would not have put it in just the way that he does. I would say, not that the claim is that the action is to be judged in its proper context. Putting the money back cannot be part of what he is now doing, since he is not putting it back, and has not put it back, but is doing, or has done, something incompatible with that, namely taken it out. What he is claiming is that the action of taking it out must be judged in the context of another, future, action of his, namely putting it back. It is this context that allows him and, he hopes, us - to redescribe his taking the money as borrowing it. (Putting the money back is not part of borrowing the money either. Putting the money back, would, in the right circumstances, be redesdribed as repaying it.)

Here we find a different kind of case where it is necessary for us to be able to refer to future actions of the agent, though for different reasons. In this case, the future action gives not the point, but circumstances relevant to the moral assessment of what the agent is now doing.

Both these kinds of case depend on the use of "intends" in which "is going to.." can be substituted for it. The other use (in which "means to.." can be substituted for it) is more closely related to the very wide use in which intentions and purposes can become conflated. But there is still a difference between them which I have already mentioned. There is a contrast implicit in "intends" or "means" which is absent when we say "in order to." There is a contrast between what I meant to do and what I actually did, or what actually happened. "When I got out the car, I meant to check the oil" suggests that I didn't for some reason. "I got out of the car to check the oil" does not suggest that I didn't check it. It is neither one or the other. "I meant to call the lift when I pressed the button"

suggests that something went wrong. Maybe I turned out the lights. But "I pressed the button to call the lift" is neutral.

The uses of "he wants.." are far more varied, complicated and contentious than either "he believes.." or "he intends.." I shall restrict myself to discussing the link between wanting something and trying to get it, or wanting to do something and trying to do it.

Both causal and dispositional accounts recognize and require a link between wanting to do something and doing it. They differ about the nature of the link, which must be such that someone may want to do something and yet not do it. On either account the possibility can be allowed. But neither account really clarifies these cases. And yet it is here that we find "he wants.." making a unique and unparaphraseable contribution. It isn't just that there is no necessary connection between wanting and trying to get, or wanting to do and doing. Sometimes, it is even part of what is wanted, that the wanter should need to do nothing to bring about what is wanted. The neglected wife may want her husband to come home soon, and bring some present, such as a bottle of plonk. But she may well specifically want that this should happen without her trying to get it, arrange it, or bring it about. If she has to ask or pressure him to do these things, they have lost their point or meaning. Again, John's desire for a fortune might be satisfied by a long-lost uncle leaving him the money, without his having to lift a finger to acquire it. It may also be that this would not satisfy him. What he wants is not just a fortune, but to make his own fortune.

There is another kind of case. A man might want to go to Tahiti to paint. He is married, he has children and what he sees as an important job. He cannot even afford to visit Tahiti as

a tourist. So although he wants to go, he does not go, nor even try to go. We expect him to go, but only under some circumstances. And we are usually pretty unclear about just what the circumstances would be. If he is offered a free ticket and a grant for a year to do it, we would probably take a refusal as evidence that he didn't want to go,not really. But he might offer an explanation. He dare not give up his job, his family might suffer. It is not that there are certain circumstances under which we expect him to go. Rather, under certain circumstances, we expect him to explain why he doesn't go, if he doesn't. If this explanation is weak or not forthcoming then we begin to take his not going as evidence that he does not want to go. We begin to suspect that there are no circumstances under which he would go, and that he doesn't want to go.

There is other behaviour that is evidence that we accept that he wants to go, and that is to be explained by his wanting to go. Reading and talking about Tahiti, learning to paint, buying maps and pictures, collecting timetables and so forth do not count as trying to get what he wants. But they are to be explained by reference to this particular want. Or think of the behaviour of a child who wants the puppy in the window. Gazing at the puppy, tears and excitement can all be evidence that the child wants the puppy, but need not count as trying to get it.

Wanting something is connected only loosely with actually trying to get it. This is supported by considering what we would be prepared to say of the would-be painter when he is actually preparing to go to Tahiti. We can now say, not just that he wants to go, but that he intends to go, ~~that he wants to go.~~ He may have to go. It is "intends" that is the more closely connected with actually preparing to go.

What is called displacement behaviour provides another range of cases where the connection between "wants and "tries to get"

does not hold. Displacement behaviour is the term used to describe what animal or person does when he/she cannot achieve what is wanted. It is behaviour that relieves frustration. Thus a stag will "attack" a nearby tree when he dare not attack his mating rival.

Wants can be offered as explanations for things that are not actions or even events. We might, for example, explain Fred's belief that Pygmalion will win the 3.30 by pointing out that he very much wants that particular horse to win. We might explain John's restlessness and bad temper by saying that he very much wanted to go to a concert this evening but could not get tickets. We might explain the fast pulse and sweating of an interviewee or an examinee by saying that he very much wants the job, or to do well in the examination.

Cases of this last kind might be used as grounds for claiming that wants are causes or that "wanting something" is a causal explanation at least in these cases. If explanation is causal in these cases, why should it not be causal in all cases? I shall discuss Fred's case later in connection with belief and the will in chapter 9 of Part II. What I say about that case applies also to the other two. But the explanation here turns on the subject's wants as well as on his beliefs. If belief is involved, the explanation cannot be purely causal. If "believes" works in the way I claim, then it cannot give causal explanations.

These examples show that the range of actions and non-actions to be explained by reference to wanting something is quite varied. These cases could not arise, much less be explained, without the terms "wants."

There is one important use of "he wants..." where no failure of the link between wanting and doing is involved. Both "wants" and "intends" are essential if we are to be able to plan actions, decide what to do in advance. For we could not draw conclusions about this, or

rather we could not accept them, without ways of identifying actions that were not (yet) being performed. We could not design an object as a process separate from building it, without a way of representing the object when it does not (yet) exist, and may never exist. We have blue-prints, diagrams, models. We could not reason about actions or plan them as distinct from performing them without a way of identifying actions that are not being performed and may never be performed, but yet are being considered for performance.

This use and the use in the "Tahiti" case turn on "wanting to do A". But we can also speak of "wanting X" where X may be an object (a painting, or a pair of scissors) or a state of affairs. It is usual in discussing wants to neglect the latter. It can be argued that "wanting X" really reduces to "wanting to do A" where doing A requires X. This is often so. I may want a pair of scissors to cut the string. So I want to cut the string with a pair of scissors. But it is not always so. The case of the neglected wife shows this. Someone may want a particular painting, to take another example. This could mean a lot of very different things that getting it or having it might consist in. Suppose he simply wants to own it. Owning something is not doing anything with it or to it. He may simply want to own the picture, not to look at it. He may not mind where it is hung or how it is cared for. Simply being the owner may be enough. The fact that he does want it need never show until something threatens his ownership. If he makes no effort to keep it even then, we have grounds for saying that he does not (really) want it. It may be objected that he wants to own the painting. That fits the case into the category of "wanting to do A" only verbally. Owning something is not yet doing anything.

Perhaps this is an extreme case. But these cases do suggest that to speak of "wanting X" need not be mere shorthand. This too

would need explaining in an acceptable account of "he wants.." It is not something that either a causal or a dispositional account can explain very readily.

It is tempting to try to go on to fill out these hints. But it is not possible to develop them in a satisfactory way without abandoning the subject of belief. And I have yet to discuss the role of "he believes" in the important context of our description of thinking. So I must leave them as hints.

BELIEF AND ACTION

PART II

BELIEVING AND THINKING

1. The traditional approach to belief

The traditional approach to belief does not involve discussion of the straightforward "executive actions" that I have been concerned with so far. It centres on problems about thinking.

In this second part, I shall examine the role of "believes" in our talk about thinking. I hope that it will become apparent that traditional philosophers were not wrong to discuss belief in this context. H.H. Price in his 1960 Gifford lectures, (published as "Belief" in 1969) is similarly sympathetic to the traditional approach. In lecture 3 of series II (pg. 299) he says:-

"The traditional Occurrence Analysis of belief was certainly mistaken when it described belief as an introspectible mental event or mental act. Nevertheless, the mental events or acts which its exponents refer to do occur, and they are relevant to the analysis of belief. Only, it is a mistake to say that these mental events or acts are beliefs or believings. I suggest, therefore, that we ought to be more indulgent to the traditional Occurrence Analysis than we are. If we were willing to be very indulgent indeed, we might even say that its mistake was mainly a mistake of idiom.....

"Hitherto, I have been emphasizing the differences between the traditional Occurrence Analysis and the modern Dispositional Analysis, as if we had to choose between the two. The situation is not quite so bad as that. The differences are there, and if we do have to choose, we must prefer the Dispositional Analysis. But still, up to a point, we may have it both ways."

In lecture 8 of series I, he gives what we may regard as an outline of the traditional view:-

"Assenting to a proposition is of course something more than just entertaining it. But entertaining it is an essential precondition for assenting to it - or for rejecting it either, or for questioning it or for taking up any other mental attitude about it. The 'priority' here involved is logical, not temporal; ..... The important point is that in assenting to it one must also be entertaining it, whether assent comes at once, as soon as the

entertaining begins or only comes later when one has already been entertaining the proposition for some time."

Price is certainly aware of the difficulties in the traditional analysis. But he is burking the issue. We can certainly say of people that they are 'entertaining the proposition that p." (p.203) And we can also say that they assent to, agree to or accept the proposition that p. There is no obvious reason why these facts cannot be accommodated in a Dispositional Analysis. But this does not isolate the fundamental points at issue. What do these mental acts consist in? Where do they take place? How do we know about them? Does this pattern <u>always</u> happen? The two sides will give different answers; and it is here that the real disagreement lies.

Price does not make it very clear just where he stands on these issues. The first quotation above leads us to suppose that Price has rejected Dualism. But the second raises doubts, since - presumably - Price is expounding the view with some measure of approval.

There is a curious oscillation between the view that entertaining is <u>logically</u> prior, but not (necessarily) temporally prior, to assent and that it is temporally prior. In the next lecture (9, on p. 205) Price gives a description of the process of entertaining that indicates that entertaining a proposition must take time. But he does seem to accept that entertaining and assenting <u>always</u> happen. And that is a view which a dispositionalist must reject.

Nor is his rejection of introspection quite whole-hearted. On p. 275 he refers to "introspective evidence". "So if a person's hopes and fears throw some light on his beliefs, A's own introspective evidence is not, after all, quite irrelevant to the question 'Does A believe that p?' If we wish to answer that question we may have to consider what goes on in A's own inner life."

(Compare also what he says about the "inner life on p. 295.)

The fundamental objections to the traditionalist approach are not just against the vocabulary of "entertaining" and "assenting." They are levelled against the Dualist theory of the mind which underlies the vocabulary. Price gives a full and sympathetic account of the traditional idiom, but does not explain how it is to be separated from Dualism. This is not the place for a general discussion of the objections to Dualism. But it is appropriate to outline some of the more powerful objections to the Dualist account of mental acts and of "believes." One example of the attack is to be found in Ryle's "The Concept of Mind," chapter IX.

The first objection to consider is that the relevant acts or actions are not like other actions in crucial respects. It seems absurd to ask just when X made this or that judgement or how many judgements he made before breakfast, whether he enjoyed it or was interrupted and so forth. See pp.275, 280, 282 of "Concept of Mind." Similar points are made against the notion of volitions on p. 63ff.

This is not in itself an objection. In everyday talk it makes perfectly good sense to ask when I came to some conclusion, or to say that I realized that p just before lunch. There is nothing wrong with saying that I convinced you of two things this morning or that there is one thing that I cannot accept in your article. Geach concludes that although judgement-making acts are 'loosely' tied in time, they are nevertheless tied. (See p. 105/6 of "Mental Acts.") In everyday usage, he is right.

The actual word "judge" or "judgement" is not common in everyday speech outside the law. We say "In my judgement this is wrong" or "He judged the distance correctly." There seems in this use to be an implied contrast between judging the distance and measuring it, and between my judgement that the thing is wrong and my demonstration or

proof that it is wrong. "Judge" and "judgement" in philosophical literature must be taken as portmanteau words covering "realize", "conclude", "decide" and so forth.

There is no objection to what we say every day. There is an objection to a philosophical claim that all beliefs must arrive like dateable realizations and that beliefs must be acquired in order, like possessions, houses, etc. We often go through a process like the one that Price describes. The objection is to the claim that acquiring a belief must always be like that; and to the claim that these stages do not happen in the every-day world, but in a separate, mental world.

But the objection is still not made out. There are many actions that cannot be clearly located in time or space. Just when did I sit down? Just where did I switch on the light? How can I be interrupted in winning a race?

But in the case of executive actions, questions like these can be answered or rejected in the light of further specification and description in a given context. In the case of volitions any further specification and description is parasitic on and parallel to the specifications and description of the relevant executive actions. This and other considerations led Ryle correctly to the conclusion that "their existence is not asserted on empirical grounds."

In the everyday use of "judge", when these questions may be legitimate, the further specification is available. My realization may be marked by my saying "Aha!" or snapping my fingers. But this is no help to the traditional theories. There may be no such mark. Fred is driving along the road, towards a crossing with traffic lights. The lights change to red, and he moves his foot from accelerator to brake and stops the car at the lights. He realized that the lights had changed and took appropriate action. Again, Fred may be turning into a road, and

realize as he comes round the corner that someone is crossing the road on foot. He takes no action since he also realizes that the person crossing will be off the road before he gets that far. Here the realization is not separately marked. Indeed, if it is marked at all in the latter case, it is marked by his not doing anything.

One might claim that in these cases there is a mark of the realization. And it is part of the anti-Dualist position that there must be something, whether actual or potential. The objection is to the claim that realizing, concluding etc., must always be separable from the relevant actions. But the central point is that marks of this kind are beside the (philosophical) point. See caps 4 and 5, of Part II.

In the philosophical use of "believe" or "judge", any further specification is parasitic on and parallel to acts of assertion - or sentences - or propositions - or facts - or ideas, concepts, etc. Beliefs and judgements are in an even weaker position than volitions. For at least in the case of volitions it is clear where we are to look for the further specification. But where are we to look for further specification or a belief or a judgement? We could look to actions, or to "propositions" or sentences. These give different results. Each is unsatisfactory in different ways. And there is little reason for choosing one over the others.

These mental acts are not empirically discovered, any more than volitions were. But the fundamental difficulty here is this. In the case of public actions, the further specification comes to saying what the actions consisted in; the difficulty with mental acts is that there appears to be no ready answer to the question "What do mental acts consist in?"

Ryle goes on to object that ghostly acts of this kind do not even do the job that they were invented to do. Volitions do not explain the difference between voluntary and involuntary acts (p. 66);

and they don't explain the difference between saying something and making noises either. (See p. 278, 279.)

An objection that points particularly clearly in the direction of my own account was raised by G.E. Moore in "Some Main Problems of Philosophy." Here we are led to the conclusion that believing something cannot be a relation between the believer and some object - a proposition. This argument is to be found on p. 263 of Moore's book.

"It is an objection to the supposition that there are such things as propositions at all, and that belief consists merely in an attitude of mind to these supposed entities..... It is that if you consider what happens when a man entertains a false belief, it does not seem as if his belief consisted merely in his having a relation to some object which certainly is. It seems rather as if the thing he was believing, the object of his belief, were just the fact which certainly is not - which certainly is not, because his belief is false.....

"And though you may reply: 'Yes there is such a thing; there is the proposition that we are now hearing that noise; this is what we conceive; and this most certainly is; the only thing which is not is the fact which would be, if the proposition were true' - though you may make this reply and may thus recur to the theory that there may be two different things having the same name, and that though only one of them is in the present case, yet that one most undoubtedly is: yet surely this reply is not perfectly satisfactory. In merely making it, in distinguishing between the proposition which is, and the fact, having the same name, which you admit, in this case, is not, you are surely conceiving both: you could not even say that the fact is not, without conceiving it. And hence the conclusion remains...."

(What Moore says here is surprising. For in this passage he concludes that there are no such things as propositions, while he is quite certain that there are such things on p. 56. In his introduction to the book, written in 1953, 43 years after he gave the lectures, Moore explains that he was possibly using the word "proposition"

in two different senses. It seems to me that it may just be possible for him to say this; but I am not here concerned to dispute the move.)

His argument is making the point that there must be a way of expressing a 'relation' between me and a 'fact' which paradoxically is not. And without a vocabulary of this sort, it would be impossible to have the conceptual network that we are concerned with here at all.

Bernard Mayo, in his article "Belief and Constraint" (Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1963/4,) presents the following argument against the traditional approach:-

"It is, to begin with, clearly necessary that any proposition which someone is to believe should be, at least at some time and in some guise, present to his consciousness: it must, as the jargon had it, be entertained. Now a dilemma appears. Either the proposition is entertained without commitment to belief in its truth - i.e. is entertained as only possibly true - or it is entertained as true. If the former, then the problem on our hands is how we advance from entertainment to belief; if the latter, this problem is merely shelved, for we still want to know what distinguishes entertaining as true - which is now just a rephrasal of 'believing' - from entertaining as merely possibly true."

It is difficult to know just what to make of this argument. It does seem to make its destructive point. Yet there is something wrong with the question "How do we advance from or distinguish 'entertaining' and 'believing'?" For this question looks as if it can be asked again whatever account we may give of belief. If so, the argument will prove too much; for it will prove that we cannot arrive at conclusions.

Is the argument valid against the traditional account? I think it is. In terms of the traditional account, I do not see how Mayo's dilemma can be shown to be false, or how his question is to be turned. But I believe that my account can allow an explanation of

what is wrong with the question.

My last point against the traditional approach fastens on the notion of introspection. Traditional theories are committed to introspection: belief is, after all, a state of the believer's mind; I discover what my states of mind are by introspection. This aspect of Dualist or traditional theories of the mind has been severely and rightly criticized. But even if there were something that could be called introspection of some mental states, it would not explain how I know what I believe. It would not explain it because I answer the questions whether p and whether I believe that p in exactly the same way, namely by considering whether p. For me, the questions whether p and whether I believe that p have the same answer. If I have decided that p, a separate process of trying to decide whether I believe that p is superfluous. It is difficult to see what such a process might consist in. From A's point of view, the question "Does A think that p?" is indistinguishable from the questions "Is it right to think that p?" and "Is it the case that p?" I have already discussed this point, in Part I, chapter 5. I argued there that believing that p and 'p' could not be conceptually distinct states of affairs. The point about introspection follows from that, and so I shall not repeat the arguments here.

The traditional approach to belief will not do. We do cogitate, ponder, reject, accept, conclude, wonder, suppose, hope, prove, fear, decide, realize, agree that .... Even though we reject traditional accounts of these acts, we may still ask what they consist in, and whether alternative accounts are satisfactory. In what follows, I shall be concerned to develop at least an outline account of mental acts, without relying on dualist theories of the mind. I shall try to show that my account of the logical role or point of "believes" is adequate for the context of our talk about thinking. And a similar

account of other words in the same vocabulary will emerge.

Ryle develops one plausible account in a long series of articles, beginning with "Thinking and Language". These are usefully collected together in his Collected Papers, with one or two exceptions. I shall start with them.

2. Ryle on Thinking

Ryle's account consists of an approach to the problem and several theses about thinking in general and pondering in particular. He starts from the point that I have already made, and relied on extensively, in my discussion of 'executive action'. Descriptions of action are ordered in a hierarchy, and if we want to know what some action consists in, we are answered by being given the next lower-level descriptions of that action. Opening the bridge consists of cutting the tape and saying a few well-chosen words. Turning on the light consists of pressing the appropriate switch, and so forth. Ryle asks "What does thinking consist in?" and "What is the relationship between the history-description of thinking and the chronicle-description?" The early articles are not concerned only with thinking as pondering, wondering, or cogitating, but these cases of thinking move more to the foreground of his attention in the later articles.

The first claim to consider is made by Ryle in "Thinking and Language", which was his contribution to a symposium held by the Aristotelian Society. Perhaps it is significant that this particular claim does not reappear in the later articles. Ryle was concerned to argue that there can be thinking where there is no use of language, and to offer a possible explanation for the point that Iris Murdoch had argued in her contribution, that descriptions of thinking are "inherently metaphorical." He argues that "thinking is a polymorphous word." This means that thinking is to be compared to "working", and to "fighting, trading, playing, housekeeping and farming."

"There is no general answer to the question 'What does thinking consist of?' There are hosts of widely different sorts of toilings and idlings, engaging in any one of which is thinking."

Urmson, in "Polymorphous Concepts," tries out various interpretations, and arrives at the following position:

"(i) For primary cases of thinking and working we can find necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the concept other than action content. This adequately explains why action content is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition.

"(ii) Cases where we are willing to apply the concept, though the necessary and sufficient conditions for primary employment are not satisfied, are to be explained by similarity in content to typical cases of primary application of the concept. But these are cases of secondary thinking or working only for certain limited purposes and in certain contexts."

Earlier, he says, "Primary thinking is any activity devoted to the answering of a question or the solving of a problem, theoretical or practical." "Action-content" seems to be at least very like my 'material elements of the action' - "Let us for syntactical convenience, coin the expression 'action-content' as equivalent to 'that of which the action consists.'" - he says early in the article.

I do not think this is right as it stands, nor that it really makes enough of Ryle's idea. In the first place it is surely clear the "action-content" is rarely or never the necessary or sufficient condition of any description of actions; there are many descriptions of actions that do not depend on any particular "action-content" for their truth. There are some mixed descriptions, that demand both formal and material elements to be present, instead of just formal elements.

In the second place, I do not think that Urmson shows that those cases that he wants to regard as primary are so. Urmson's argument is:

"If I were to start to speak to Ryle, and he said 'Hang on a bit, I am thinking' it would be a bit upsetting if it later emerged that he had been drifting in idle reverie from one topic to another, or going over

(not, for example, trying to reconstruct) the fortunes of the heroine of a novel. Or what should we think of the intelligence of a man who rejected the view that thinking is as tiring as manual labour on the ground that reverie was minimally fatiguing? Do I comply with the injunction 'Think before you act' if I daydream a little about my future actions before performing them? Should Benn's Thinkers Library have included detective stories to be ruminated over by the evening fire? It seems to me that these cases of idly ruminating over the real or imaginary are quite parallel to what we call secondary cases of working."

Each question is an implicit argument. But there are replies.

(i) It is upsetting to go into a shop or a bar to buy something and to have to wait for attention, if it emerges that the assistants are idly gossiping or drinking tea. It is not (or should not be) upsetting if it emerges that they have been serving other people or coping with an emergency. Whether one may expect immediate attention from someone else at some time and in some context depends on what one wants with them and what else they are doing. But we cannot argue from the case of the shop assistants that gossiping is a secondary case of talking.

(ii) Nor would one have much time for the man who argued that knitting was less tiring than writing an article. Just as there are different kinds of thinking, there are different kinds of manual labour; some are more tiring than others.

(iii) Benn's Thinker's Library (with which, unfortunately, I am not directly acquainted) does not include anything to be ruminated over. (Although ruminating over something might be an important part of coming to understand it, for some people, at least.) But the misunderstanding that Urmson is pointing to us like the misunderstanding of someone who, being asked to push a car, merely leans against it without trying to move it. He is pushing it, but not in the

way intended by the instruction.

(iv) There is a similar point buried in the argument from "Think before you act." "Look before you leap" is not obeyed by someone who casts an idle glance, but by someone who carefully inspects, before he leaps. But an idle glance is just as much a look as a careful inspection. I cannot see why we should not regard ruminating and day-dreaming as just as primary as pondering etc.

If there are no primary cases of thinking, and I cannot see that Urmson gives us any reason for supposing that there are, I think that this interpretation of the suggestion that thinking is 'polymorphous' fails.

Ryle's second claim, which does recur throughout the series of articles, is that "thinking is an adverbial verb." Just what this means is not entirely clear. Ryle glosses the term as "not separately do-able" or "not autonomous." (See, for example "The Thinking of Thoughts"). If it means that thinking cannot be a basic, direct, or lowest-level action, then we have not gained much; the same is true of very many actions. But the comparison that Ryle makes is with "hurrying." We can extract from this a useful point, and suggest a criterion for one concept of adverbiality, which will throw light on some thinking at least.

One reason for saying that "hurrying" is an adverbial verb is that it stands on a special relation to an adverb, namely, "quickly." Now it is true that there are adverbs that stand in a special relation to "thinking" - namely "thoughtfully" "with care" "attentively" and so forth. But in the first place, this seems to be a merely grammatical feature of our language. We can always invent an adverb to stand in the appropriate relation to a given verb. Many of the examples that Ryle considers do not actually have such an adverb in ordinary English. So this is not the criterion that Ryle had in mind, anyway. We could

always invent a suitable adverb, by using 'in a ... way' or 'in a ... manner.' But Ryle's other examples are all indirect or non-basic actions, and I would distinguish them from "hurrying."

In "Thinking and Reflecting," Ryle says:

"It is sometimes said that while thinking does indeed need some vehicle or other, still some philosophers are so stingy about the number of eligible vehicles that they restrictively say that thinking needs for its vehicles only bits of English or French etc. ..... What they should do, it is suggested, is let in lots more kinds of vehicles, ... I am rejecting this vehicle-passenger model altogether. Adverbial verbs are not verbs for autonomous doings and so not of autonomous doings which, like bicycling and strumming, need some apparatus or other. Hurrying over breakfast does require eating, but not as its vehicle; rather, to put it crudely, as an adverb needs some suitable verb or other."

Ryle rightly rejects the idea that thinking needs "vehicles." But this seems to mean the idea that thinking needs instruments or apparatus. Ryle does not reject the idea that descriptions of thinking are hierarchically organized in the same way as other descriptions of actions. So we may still say that thinking has constituents. Movements of wrist, eye or tongue, prickings of the ears are related to thinking in the same way as arm movements are related to signalling. This may or may not be what Ryle intended. But it is difficult to see what adverbs have got to do with this. We expect to find a distinction between "non-autonomous doings" and "adverbial verbs" and we do not get it.

One might try to distinguish a class of verbs that are adverbial by saying that adverbial verbs are not part of the hierarchy of descriptions, but rather describe "the way in which the constituents are performed" as opposed to giving either the constituents of any action or giving the reasons for the constituents and so justifying a redescription. But this phrase will not do on its own. For example, one might argue that to slope arms obediently is to do so in a certain way, and doing so in that

way is to obey an order. But, to slope arms obediently is to slope arms because one has been ordered to. We have no certain way of distinguishing "hurry" from "obey", and yet, I would think, we need to. "Obey" gives the reason for the performance of the constituent actions, and is in that respect like an indirect action, and unlike thinking, perhaps. (Sometimes "obediently" is applied as a "true" adverb. There is a particular sheepish and reluctant way that people do things when they are obeying an order they resent or that is especially unpleasant.)

The criterion that I suggest is this. Consider a man who is running to the station, catching the train, going to work. Suppose that he is not exercising or trying to impress anyone, but that he is late and so is hurrying to the station. The hierarchy of descriptions builds up as "moving his legs", "running to the station", "catching the train", "going to work." Each redescription is justified by appeal to the reasons for, or the point of, the lower-level description. Now, the description "hurrying" could be applied instead of the description "running." So the hierarchy could be given as "running/hurrying to the station", "catching the train", etc. But if, for example, he is running, not because he is late and wants to catch the train, but because he is exercising, the hierarchy builds up in a very different way. It becomes "running to the station", "exercising", "losing weight" etc. The description "hurrying" can be applied at whatever stage it may be in the hierarchy without any consequential changes in descriptions that can be applied higher in the hierarchy. Non-adverbial verbs, like "exercising", if they apply to an action, do mean that descriptions higher in the hierarchy must be different from what they would have been if they had not been applicable.

One might be inclined to object that this distinction - even if it is a real one - does not apply to "hurry."

The man running to the station is running, moving his legs in a certain way and at a certain speed, because he will not catch the train unless he gets to the station more quickly than he would if he were to walk. So, in this case, his hurrying consists of his running (material element) in order to get to the station quickly (formal element). There is no need to put "hurry" in a special class at all. But this will lead to the conclusion that "hurrying" consists of doing something or other. And I think that this is wrong. (But even if one could say that hurrying had constituents, it would not necessarily conflict with my suggestion.)

The reason that it seems to me wrong to say that hurrying has constituents is this. Redescribing an action is in general justified by, and amounts to giving, the point of the constituent actions. "Hurrying" is doing whatever it may be quickly, or perhaps doing something in one way rather than another because it takes less time to do it that way. But the rate at which one carries out an action is not itself a constituent action amongst the others, any more than the weight of a car is a constituent part of the car. So putting on one's coat slowly or putting it on quickly may have the same constituents; but they will be performed at different speeds. True, one may say that the man's running to the station (rather than walking) constitutes his hurrying. Here, "hurrying" does give a reason or a point. But it is a reason for choosing between alternative ways of achieving the same end. It is a criterion of success over and above the main one - that of getting to the station.

Ryle mentions another reason for rejecting this conclusion. He says, "Hurrying over breakfast does require eating, but not as its vehicle; rather, to put it coarsely, as an adverb needs some suitable verb or other." One cannot just hurry, as one can just eat breakfast. But that is not yet a clear criterion. There are many other

actions of which that much is true; any indirect, non-basic, action can be seen as satisfying that criterion. (Indeed, Sibley questions whether "think" does satisfy it; perhaps one can "just think.") It may be that Ryle's point here is the same as the point that I reached at the end of the last paragraph. "Hurrying" cannot be, or give, the only point, or, to be more cautious, the main point of an action. We may fit "hurrying" into the framework of formal and material elements; but the formal element implicit in "hurrying" must be a subsidiary or secondary one, parasitic on some other point or purpose. And this gives a second, non-linguistic criterion for the distinction, and besides explains and justifies the drawing of the distinction at all.

If this is correct, then we can draw a reasonably clear and useful distinction between verbs that we may call adverbial, and verbs that we can describe as "autonomous doings." We can say that "thinking" is an adverbial verb; and we can explain that this means that the various suggested vehicles, like tongue and eye-movements, or bits of French or English, are not constituents of thinking. For both of my criteria apply to thinking.

This claim is both true and interesting for some cases, but is not really adequate for the philosophically important cases, those involving what "le Penseur" is doing - i.e. meditating, ruminating, pondering. A tennis player who is thinking what he is doing, is anticipating, supposing, calculating and so forth. Applying these descriptions to him does not presuppose that any actions have been performed which were not constituent actions of the activity of playing tennis. His anticipations, suppositions, and calculations show themselves in the constituent actions that he performs, and in the "limitations and justifications" that govern his play, and in the way that he reacts to and adapts to the situation in which he is. And this applies to all cases

of "executive action." But Ryle considers carefully a whole range of cases that are rather different - although he does not explicitly recognize their differences. These are cases like those of "le Penseur" or Euclid finding the proof of a theorem and drawing figures in the sand, or a man composing a piece of music, whether sitting at a piano and playing or at a desk and scribbling, or a man designing a yacht, or writing an after-dinner speech or a lecture.

These cases are different in one important respect. But at the end of the day, it will be seen that their use is fundamentally the same as in the cases of executive action. The difference is that in these cases it seems that "thinking" is not applied as an adverbial verb in my sense. In these cases there are at least candidates for the role of constituents. Le Penseur's mutterings, Euclid's lines in the sand, the architect's arranging and rearranging his toy bricks, all have a point which can be given as "working out the problem," "trying out this design," "trying to formulate an idea." Doing any of these things, is thinking. But there is no other point to the activities, as there is in the cases where "thinking" is applied as an adverbial verb, in the context of the performance of an executive action.

Describing a tennis player as thinking - as calculating, planning, anticipating - does not give the point of any of his constituent foot, arm or eye movements. The point of those is given in the hierarchy of descriptions that leads up to "playing tennis." The descriptions of "what the tennis player is doing", insofar as they describe him as thinking, must be seen as ways of giving the limitations and justifications of the various constituent actions. The vocabulary of thinking functions in ways related to the role that I have explained for "believes" in this context. My suggestion was that "believes" is a way of identifying the limitations and justifications that explain the plan of the

action. It is the plan of the action that shows how the formal elements or the point of the action generates the material elements or constituents of the action. The special feature of "believes" is that it allows for certain of the agent's mistakes. Other words have other special features. Thus, "he anticipated that the return would be a lob" indicates that the player has predicted and prepared for that particular return, that he has got something right.

But if the same player is sitting down and planning his tactics for the match, with the aid of models, say, or talking or sketching, the case is very different. He is not now playing tennis; there are no actions that are or could be constituents of tennis going on. But his talking, sketching or model-moving can be described as "pondering", "deciding tactics", "planning the match" and so on. Although he is not playing tennis now, the point of what he is doing has still to be explained by reference to tennis. The tennis involved lies in the future.

Some actions and activities may be done "thinking what one is doing" or "not thinking what one is doing." Some actions and activities may be performed mechanically, by rote, out of habit. In other cases, if someone is performing that action, it follows that he is thinking. One can play tennis, drive a bus, switch on a light, dial a telephone number, pick up one's umbrella, without thinking. One cannot plan, anticipate, ponder, ruminate, without thinking what one is doing. Or rather, to do these things is to think. I suggest that this distinction coincides with the distinction between adverbial and non-adverbial uses of "think." Certainly the thinking of the tennis player cannot be interrupted, or easy or difficult; the case of the tennis player provides the clearest case for the classic arguments against theories of the traditional kind. But pondering, ruminating, working out etc. do not suit these arguments so well; these can be easy or difficult, take two hours, be interrupted and so forth.

Ryle takes the idea that thinking is adverbial to apply to all cases of thinking. It seems, however, that he interprets "adverbial" in a much wider sense than I do, comparing thinking not only with hurrying, but also with mimicking, demonstrating, and obeying. (See, for example, "The Thinking of Thoughts.") In this wider sense we say only that thinking is "not separately do-able," and we may ask what the thinking consists in. This seems to amount to little more than a claim that thinking cannot be basic, direct action. Ryle may well be right about this. The next stage is to consider whether he is right.

3. Ryle and le Penseur

Ryle uses the cases of le Penseur sitting, chin in hand, pondering, meditating, puzzling, contemplating etc. and Euclid, drawing figures in the sand to arrive at a proof of a theorem, as his stock examples of this kind of thinking. He develops two ideas about cases like these. One idea is that "thinking is author-optional," and the other is that "thinking is intention-parasitic." Perhaps the best and simplest way of describing these ideas is to quote Ryle. In "Thinking and Reflecting" he says:-

"Strolling across a golf course, we see a lot of pairs and fours of golfers playing one hole after another in regular sequence. But now we see a single golfer, with six golf balls in front of him, hitting each of them, one after the other, towards one and the same green. He then goes and collects the balls, comes back to where he was before, and does it again. What is he doing? He is not playing golf. He has no opponent; he does not putt the balls into the hole; he lays the balls by hand on to the turf from which he is going to hit them. Obviously he is practising approach-shots. But what distinguishes a practice approach-shot from a real one? Several things. Negatively, he is not trying to win a match since there is no match. Nor in practising is he both making approach-shots and doing something else as well. Positively, he performs each of his strokes as a piece of self-training. Training for what? Training for making approach-shots in matches to come. But he cannot be practising without, in some way, having in mind the non-practice approach-shots of future live matches. The 'thick' description of what he is engaged in requires reference to his thoughts, in some sense, of future non-practice approach-shots. These are what it is for. His activity of practising approach-shots is parasitic on that of making match approach-shots. There are two points about practice approach-shots that need to be brought out for future use:

"The first point is that the 'thick' description of them contains a reference to his having in mind will-be or may-be match approach shots. He will have practised in vain if his performance in these matches shows no improvement.

"The second point is that the practice approach-shots are in some degree detached or disengaged from the conditions under which match approach-shots have to be made. The practiser can play from where he likes; he can hit without having to wait for his turn; he need not even have a green to play for; a tree stump in a field would do; he need only have a mashie with him. Indeed he might do without golf-balls and a mashie; dandelions and a walking stick might serve his turn. As his circumstance-dependence and apparatus-dependence decrease, so his practice-actions approximate more and more closely to being pure 'voluntaries', that is, things the doing of which is within his absolute initiative and option. I suggest already that his partial detachment from the circumstances and the apparatus of golf-matches points up the road to le Penseur's total or nearly total detachment from what exists and is going on around him.

"There are many activities other than practising which share with it these two cardinal features of intention-parasitism and circumstance-detachment..."

Later Ryle makes the suggestion that what le Penseur is doing consists of "intention-parasitic" and "author optional" doings.

The claim that thinking is "author-optional" is explained by reference to "detachment from the circumstances and apparatus of golf-matches" and it points to "detachment from what exists and what is going on." At first sight, it seems that this comparison gives an interesting explanation of one feature of thinking. Le Penseur can carry out all sorts of the activities that we call thinking without any equipment, with his hands and feet tied, in any place, at any time. His ponderings, ruminations, plannings and examinings are all "within his own absolute initiative and option." It is true that le Penseur is detached from what exists and what is going on around him in one sense. He can think about something that does not exist, and he can think about things without even knowing whether they exist or not. He can contemplate activities, events and objects that are not before his eyes, without performing them or observing them, and independently of his spatio-temporal relations to them.

But he can be constrained. He may try to work out a problem or compose a lecture or piece of music, but prevented from doing so. He may be prevented by other thoughts that get in the way; he may be unable to concentrate on his task because he cannot help going over some recent incident whether traumatic or pleasing - perhaps something in his surroundings calls it to mind. But he may also be prevented by distraction from the outside world. Noise, discomfort and so on may get in the way. He may be prevented by the necessity of concentrating on something else he is doing. And all of this applies as well to the golfer.

There may also be thinking which le Penseur is unable to perform without equipment of one kind or another. The architect or designer may be unable to design his buildings without his model bricks, and the philosopher may be unable to compose his article without paper and pen. Or it may be that while a good deal of the work can be done "in their heads" they are unable to complete the task independently of the "outside" world. One might reply that even though this may be true in practice, it is not true in principle. But whether that is so or not, it is difficult to see any difference between the extent to which actions like moving one's finger is within one's own initiative and option and these cases. Is moving one's finger "detached from circumstances, from what exists and what is going on around one?"

There is another interpretation of this idea. The point about practising seems to be that what is to count as practising is dependent on the intentions and purposes of the author, in a way that what is to count as performing most actions is not. Whether an action of mine is to count as practising is very much up to me; but whether it is to count as making an approach-shot is not up to me. (Of course my intentions are one of the relevant considerations.) So, the

question whether or not some action is to count as practising a golf-swing is settled by discovering whether or not the practiser improves, or at least intends by performing that action to improve.

But his freedom is limited. Although he can practice in his office or with a walking-stick and dandelions, we must surely expect that at some point he will practice with golf club and green. Surely, at some point his practising must consist of trying to make the shot, play the piece or whatever. Second, we might accept that someone who was lopping the heads off dandelions was practising his golf-swing; but surely we could not say the same of a man who was weight-lifting or pruning his roses with secateurs - even if his golf improved as a result, and that was his intention. Practising golf or swimming or a piece of music need not always be an attempt at a full-blooded performance, But we might say that it must or at least be an attempt to produce something that resembles the full-blooded performance. But of course the full-blooded performance is not "author-optional," and neither is the question whether a given action resembles some full-blooded performance to be settled just by appealing to the intentions of the agent.

Of course, Ryle does not claim either that thinking is the only author-optional activity, or that being author-optional is not a matter of degree. He claims only that thinking is highly author-optional. But there is a real question here whether we can order actions by the degree to which they are author-optional or circumstance-dependent in any significant way? One obvious way of doing this is to give some way of counting the circumstances that an action is dependent on. Initially, one would like to say that opening a bridge or taking an X-ray were highly circumstance dependent, while moving one's finger or talking to oneself were not. But it is difficult to believe that a criterion like this could be constructed.

One might reply that there is no real problem here. It is fairly clear where we want to put actions on this scale, even if we cannot specify a hard criterion for doing so. And it seems clear that pondering as le Penseur is at one extreme.

Nevertheless there are snags that make it unclear just what the significance of these judgements is. First, cases of thinking or pondering may be placed at different points along the scale. "Composing," for example, depends heavily on the conventions about musical writing and notation; so one might say that in one way it was highly circumstance-dependent. But then it does not require elaborate equipment in the way that taking an X-ray does; and so in another way it is highly circumstance-independent. "Talking to oneself" is very like composing in these respects. So it isn't clear where "talking to oneself" is to be placed; and consequently not clear where "pondering" is to be placed.

One might try to distinguish between dependence on historical or social circumstances and dependence on physical circumstances. Thinking is in many cases dependent on historical or social circumstances. But since it is independent of physical circumstances, we can still maintain that it is highly author-optional. The architect may be dependent on his models, the scientist on his laboratory equipment. But this dependence is contingent, not necessary. Nor will it do to object that talking requires the apparatus of tongue, lips and teeth. The way in which I use apparatus like cameras and spanners is very different from the way in which I 'use' my tongue and lips; it is so different that I am reluctant even to grant that it really makes sense to say that I <u>use</u> them.

The architect or scientist may only be contingently dependent on their equipment; it is conceivable that they should not need it. But then so is the X-ray technician, the miner, the sailor,

and the surveyor. Equally the athlete, the policeman and the pearl-diver do not need apparatus to perform their tasks. And although they are dependent on physical circumstances of one kind or another, le Penseur is dependent on them in the same way. There must be oxygen in the air, conditions must be tolerable, there must not be unreasonable distractions and so forth.

Ryle's point does have a value in the context of the traditional discussion. We can see different examples of thinking in a wider context. But it does not help us to develop a positive account of thinking. Nor will we find much help in the notion of "intention-parasitism."

The idea that thinking is intention-parasitic also needs to be interpreted. For it is at least plausible, even if it is empty, to say that any action which is not a "basic" or "direct" action is intention-parasitic to some degree. Whether my arm and finger movements count as turning on the light or tapping the wall partly depends on my intention in making those movements. But there is a difference between this sense of intention-parasitic and the sense that Ryle has in mind. The man who is practising or rehearsing is not now performing the action he intends to perform. (I have already suggested in chapter 8 of Part I that allowing us to state this difference is one function of the word "intends" in the language.) I think that this distinction is reasonably clear, that it is what Ryle intended (save the mark!) and that it separates an interesting class of actions.

The suggestion looks like an answer, or at least the beginnings of an answer, to two problems about thinking. It offers an answer because it offers a way of identifying the "constituents" of thinking, and explaining the relationship between "thick" and "thin" descriptions of thinking. ("Thick" and "thin" are Ryle's graphic terms for them.)

One problem that seems to be resolved is the problem about what knowledge consists in. For le Penseur's thinking ends, as Euclid's does, in the acquisition of knowledge or understanding. Knowledge and understanding are explained as consisting in the ability to do or to say certain things, or perhaps the ability to produce certain things, such as proofs, evidence, explanations, lectures or articles. The idea that pondering or ruminating is parasitic on the intention to produce the relevant things or perform the relevant activities then looks very appealing.

Another attraction of the suggestion is that the examples of thinking that seems to be intended by the traditional "entertaining" are set in the context of a wider range of examples and can be seen to fit in. For other examples that Ryle considers are clearly intention-parasitic. Composing a piece of music is parasitic on its being performed or performable; designing a yacht or a memorial are parasitic on building it; writing an after-dinner-speech is parasitic on delivering it, and finding the right word for a poem - well, that one is a bit more difficult to specify briefly. But all these are just as much examples of thinking as anything that Euclid or le Penseur may be doing. The difference is that they are not concerned to discover truth, nor consequently to entertain and accept propositions - except incidentally.

The following quotation from "The Thinking of Thoughts" illustrates how Ryle talks about the relationship, and shows how he has developed and systematized ideas that he first discusses in "The Concept of Mind." This quotation reminds one of pg. 273, for example:-

"... when he (sc. le Penseur) has finished his explorations, he will then be able to march along some stretches of his old tracks, pacing this time not interrogatively but didactically. He will then be able to pilot others along ways along which no-one had piloted him and delete some of the queries that he had inscribed on his own, originally hypothetical, sign-posts."

Later in the same article he offers a more rigorous parallel:-

"As jumping a stream in order to find out if it is jumpable is on a higher sophistication-level than jumping to get to the other side, so exploring is on a higher sophistication-level than piloting, which in its turn is on a higher sophistication-level than following a pilot's lead. Similarly, Euclid trying to find the proof of a new theorem is working on a higher accomplishment-level than Euclid trying to teach students his proof when he has got it; and trying to teach it is a task on a higher accomplishment-level than that on which his students are working in trying to master it."

Due care must be taken with terms like "sophistication-level" or "accomplishment-level". For Ryle might have put his point by saying that exploring or discovering proofs are more basic than piloting or teaching and learning, on the ground that the exploring or discovering must come first. But these are also conceptually dependent on the piloting or teaching and learning. And the complexity of these relations marks the philosophically central cases out from the very simple case of jumping the stream with various different intentions. One cannot explain a proof that one has not yet got, or pilot someone along a route that has never been travelled before, or travel from A to B without following a lead or instructions or directions of some kind. But one can jump across a stream in order to get to the other side without it having been jumped to find out if it is jumpable. In the case of jumping the stream, there is only parasitism one way. But the more complex relations in the other cases mean that the two kinds of activity are interdependent. So Euclid's teaching or explaining the proof is the point, or one point, of his pondering and trying to find it. So his pondering is parasitic on his intentions. But his teaching depends on his having pondered and found the proof (or learnt and understood it when someone else has found it.) So his teaching is parasitic, though not intention-parasitic, on his pondering. So far, this is only a niggling point. But there are other doubts about this move.

It isn't just that we must remember that different kinds of dependence or parasitism may run both ways. It isn't even really clear that le Penseur's ponderings under at least some of the interesting descriptions, are parasitic on anything at all. We say of a lecturer or writer that he is stating his problem, reminding the audience or reader of this or that pertinent fact, marshalling his arguments, describing his experiment, rejecting possibilities, suggesting a solution, warning of possible mistakes or misinterpretations, drawing his conclusion and proving his theory. He may be examining a hypothesis here, analysing a crux there, referring to an authority elsewhere and so on. But all of these are things that we can quite naturally say that le Penseur is doing in his unorganized mutterings and head-scratchings alone in his study. The lecturer addresses his audience, and le Penseur addresses himself. They each address themselves in the same ways, to what they are doing.

Now it may seem that I am ignoring a distinction that Ryle is specifically concerned to emphasize. He distinguishes between explaining or expounding a developed theory and working out and formulating that theory. On pg. 273 of "Concept of Mind" he compares the difference between these two to the difference between making a path and using it, and he repeatedly emphasizes similar differences, as for example in the passage quoted earlier from "The Thinking of Thoughts." His contention is that traditional accounts of 'the intellect' ignore this distinction and assimilate making a path to using it, expounding a proof to formulating it.

But I do not think that I am making this mistake. I am not committed to the view that le Penseur and the lecturer do these things in the same ways, or indeed that either proceeds by any kind of series of syllogisms or truth-tables. Nor am I committed to the idea

that they both do all of the same things. In pointing out that le Penseur may on occasion do some of the same things that the lecturer does, I am not committing myself to any particular account of mental acts.

A more fundamental difficulty stems from the account of knowledge and understanding that is involved. Any particular piece of knowledge or understanding might be relevant to any action or activity under some circumstances or other. We cannot predict in advance what might be a reason for doing something. So when Euclid is after a proof, or le Penseur after an idea, their ponderings might turn out to be parasitic on almost any action or activity. Moreover, they need have no particular action or activity in mind when they are pondering. And in this, they will be unlike the man practising approach-shots. He may not have any particular match or any particular shots in mind, but he will have the playing of approach-shots in matches in mind. It is even conceivable that he may not ever actually intend to play golf for real. Still, the criterion of success in practising for him is the playing of approach-shots under match conditions, and in that sense at least, he must have them in mind. But the parasitism of ponderings where they are concerned with knowledge will be even weaker than this. For there is no formulable criterion of success for Euclid or le Penseur like the one for the golfer. Even their motive for pondering may refer to no actual or possible actions; it may be simply curiosity or bewilderment.

This is really a re-introduction of the earlier arguments against a behaviourist account of knowledge and belief. I have argued that it is wrong to see belief or knowledge as consisting in the ability or disposition to do things. Certainly, belief and knowledge are closely related to actions; but not as being dispositions or abilities, but as part of the conceptual apparatus involved in our practice of giving reasons for actions.

But these arguments are very far from conclusive. One might say that the relationship between knowledge or understanding and expounding or explaining is closer than I have allowed. Certainly it is close, and one may grant that there is a specially close relationship between these terms and the relations with other actions or activities are less close. But even so, there is a difference between thinking that has the point of producing a lecture or article, an exposition or an explanation and thinking that has the point of answering a question or finding an explanation. Writing a lecture or article is clearly parasitic on other actions or activities, on delivering the lecture or reading the article. But doing that may not be discovering anything; it may be simply reporting something that was discovered before the writing began. So thinking out the answer to a problem in geometry or science or history and the like is not directly parasitic on expounding or explaining. There is another possibly distinct stage. Some pondering is directed not towards discovering new truths or proofs, but towards expressing or explaining old ones. That pondering is directly intention-parasitic.

It was not altogether obvious that le Penseur was doing something like practising or rehearsing. He seemed to be rejecting arguments or weighing evidence for real, not practising for doing those things. But perhaps I have the analogy wrong. It should perhaps not be seen as like the relation between practising a golf-shot and playing it; for practising a golf-shot is not making it - yet. Perhaps it would be fairer to see the relation as like the relation between practising a piece of music and performing it. For performing a piece of music is playing it, perhaps to an audience, and so is practising it, at least sometimes. The differences lie, not in what the musician does at the next lowest level of description but in the situation that he is in, in his intentions and in his reactions to a mistake.

(To make the comparison closer, one should think of someone practising or rehearsing an improvisation, rather than a piece of music. I think one can rehearse an improvisation - in a way. Le Penseur's thoughts are not written for him in advance, in the way that the piece of music is written in advance for the musician by a composer).

But one crucial difference between the cases remains. The player's practising can be assessed in all the ways that a performance would be assessed. They must be, since the point of practising would be lost if they were not; the point of practising is to come to be able to play, and so to perform, the piece. But it would be quite inappropriate to assess le Penseur's mutterings or scribblings as if they were a lecture or an article. They are not intended to be that, nor are they intended to become that.

A slightly different way of explaining "intention-parasitism" is to be found in "Thinking and Saying" - (Rice University Studies, Vol. 58, no. 3). Ryle's points here are related to those that he makes in the other articles; but the emphasis is different, and the comparisons are different. Ryle asks -

"... So what can be the heuristic use or point of the undogmatic things said by us in our discussion? What do we recognize as rendering this or that contribution to our discussion successful or unsuccessful? As we know, discussions do, sometimes, get issues settled or partly settled.

"My focal point is this. The things that A and B say to each other, together with their frowns and sighs, their chuckles and hesitations, their grimaces, gestures and emphasis, may all or nearly all, be intended as experimental, i.e. be things said and done just in case they may elicit fresh and even constructive responses, or flush old stagnancies away.

"And now, what is for us of central importance, precisely the same can be true of things that the still baffled Pythagoras unconfidently mutters in solitude to himself or dubiously scrawls and rescrawls to himself in the sand. These too can be heuristic experiments, moves made in the dark, in the faint but not foolish hope that they may

prove to be self-proddings forward. Our question, 'With what heuristic intention?' can have for its correct answer, 'In order to try out whether or not it has eye-opening, memory-flogging, or cramp-easing potencies.'.....

"Thinking, then, can be saying-things-tentatively-to-oneself with the specific heuristic intention of trying, by saying them, to open one's eyes, to consolidate one's own grasp, or to get oneself out of a rut, etc. .....

"Consider for a moment what it is to do something experimentally. A boy experimentally turns a tap by turning the handle, and not by doing something else as well. Yet it may be, though he successfully turns the tap, his experiment is a failure, since a power cut prevents him from seeing what happens when he turns the tap. Our adverb 'experimentally' added not an extra action, but the specific intention-to-find-out-what-happens-when-the-tap-is-turned ....."

It does seem that Ryle here is accepting a very weak sense of "adverbial"; certainly "to experiment" is not an adverbial verb in any sense. "Experimentally" 'adds' the intention-with-which the action is done; and justifies redescribing what the boy is doing as experimenting. The extra description gives the intentions of the boy. So we know what his criteria of success are, and what his reasons for turning on the tap are.

(Failure as applied to experiments is ambiguous, of course. The experiment may be said to be a failure if it does not give the result that was planned or expected. But it may be a success even so, if the experimenter finds something out.)

Second, the case of the boy turning on the tap is rather different from that of Pythagoras. In a sense they have the same intentions - to see what happens. But the experimental turning on of the tap is a success in one way if the boy does see what happens - whatever happens. In another way, it may only be successful if no water comes out of the tap. But it is not the case that Pythagoras' experimental sayings are successful in the same ways. It is not the case that Pythagoras'

experiments are successful whatever happens, so long as he finds out what happens. If nothing happens, if his eyes are not opened nor his memory jogged, they are failures. If his eyes are opened or his grasp consolidated, they are successful. But there is more than that to it. Pythagoras is not interested in these results for their own sake, but only because, if his eyes are opened, he will find his proof.

Finally, and perhaps most important, in either case, there is no longer any close link with any future actions, that are not now being performed, but which the experimenter must have in mind. Experiments are successful if they lead to discoveries or understanding.

Some examples of thinking do stand in a fairly clear and close relationship to actions. Sometimes le Penseur is thinking about, or thinking out a future action or a plan of action. Then what le Penseur is doing is both related to and distinct from an action. This relationship, I suggest, can usefully be compared to the relationship between a blue-print of a machine and the machine itself. I discussed this earlier in discussing executive actions. This relationship, and the implied account of thinking, will work for many and varied examples, - such as, planning a campaign, plotting a coup, some stages of rehearsing a play or learning a piece of music and so forth.

Other examples of thinking are also related to actions, but in much more complicated ways. What the composer of a piece of music does is related to what the musicians do who practise and perform it. (But this case is a good deal more complicated than that, as I hope to show.)

When we consider the kind of thinking that I am chiefly concerned with, there is no firm clear relationship to any particular actions. But there is a connection with doing things in general. There is a connection with expounding, demonstrating and teaching; and

with the indefinitely wide variety of actions that any particular item of knowledge or belief may be relevant to. But although there is a connection, there are many cases of thinking whose point does not lie in any actions that may be connected. Much of the thinking of academics, crossword puzzle solvers, journalists, etc. is directed toward some future activities - expounding, demonstrating, teaching, explaining, clarifying, reporting, answering. These activities have criteria of success, which are indicated by what we call good, as in a good exposition. But much of the thinking of these people is concerned to satisfy only, or mainly, the criterion of truth.

There are some cases of thinking that involve the notion of truth especially closely. They are judged by asking of the results "Is it true?". This is not the only question that is appropriate, but it is a particularly important one in these cases. It is this connection with truth that marks them out as special, first because any connection with future actions is more remove than in other cases, and second because this connection gives them special philosophical interest.

Ryle's reference to experiments and explorations re-introduce into his account this crucial notion of truth.

Ryle's programme is fairly clear. So far I have done little more than explain what it is and register some of the difficulties that I find with his execution of it. I turn now to a more searching examination of the programme itself. Although the programme looks reasonable enough and brings out some interesting and illuminating points, in the end the model that Ryle is using does not allow us to see thinking - and so belief - clearly. We must say at the least that the pyramid of descriptions is built up in a much more complicated way than Ryle brings to light. More strongly, we can claim that Ryle's question "What are the constituents of thinking?" does not have an answer within the implied model.

4. Constituents of thinking.

Sibley, in "Ryle on Thinking" comments on Ryle's programme as follows:-

"Ryle is quite explicit that the adverbially qualified activity cannot itself be an activity of thinking; obviously so, or the adverbial account would have failed. 'The notions of being pensive and having thoughts do not explain, but need to be explained via, the notion of intelligently X-ing, where 'X' is not a verb of thinking'" ("Thinking and Reflecting," Sibley's emphasis).

"On the whole, in the later articles, Ryle provides the right sort of examples. With the tennis player he gives X-ings like moving his feet, making eye and arm movements, and swinging his racquet. With other activities, such as those of le Penseur, he mentions such inward doings as picturing numbers, saying words to oneself and manipulating imaginary chess-men, together with such overt X-ings as writing numbers on paper, uttering words aloud and manipulating real chess-men. All these can be qualified both by thought-adverbs and also by adverbs like 'absently,' 'randomly,' and 'without attention.'"

In principle, Sibley's comment seems to be a sensible one. He develops an objection to Ryle's account from it. But first there is one point to be made. There is an ambiguity about the phrase "thought-adverbs." Earlier, in chapter 2 of Part II, I discussed the suggestion that "obey" was an adverbial verb. I claimed there that "obey" and "obediently" were not really descriptions of the way in which an action is performed, but that they are applied in the light of the agent's reason for performing the action. But I admitted that sometimes "obediently" is a "true" adverb. So it is necessary to distinguish between different uses in this case. The same is true of "thinking." "Thoughtfully" can be used to describe ways of pulling one's chin, walking or scratching one's head. But these actions are not, I think, candidates for the role of constituents of thinking.

People do sometimes think without doing anything in this particular way, just as sometimes people obey orders but not in any particular manner.

Sibley critizes Ryle's account on the grounds that there are examples that he does not consider, and which do not fit his claim that thinking is not an activity.

"Ryle concentrates on examples like the tennis player and the Penseur, men thinking what they themselves are doing. He scarcely discusses, in terms of this theory, the thoughtful listener at the philosophy lecture or the mathematical demonstration. The latter is certainly thinking, following the speaker's argument, monitoring, trying to accept or reject it as it occurs. But there seems to be no neutral X-ing that he need be doing at all, and hence none to be adverbially qualified. All that has been shown positively, I believe, is that thinking and pondering are not in one sense activities."

That sense is the "process" sense of activities, in which the task of a weight-lifter in holding the weight still above his head is not an activity, since no change occurs while he is doing it.

I am not convinced that Sibley here really undermines Ryle's programme in any fundamental way. Listening is not a thinking verb of the same kind as pondering or planning. One may listen to something without thinking about it, attentively or inattentively, orabsent-mindedly. And although "listen carelessly" does not make sense, "listen carefully" is not mere pleonasm. The thoughtful listener at a mathematics lecture may be thinking about what is being said, testing the arguments, drawing corollaries and so forth. But he may not be. And we can expect to find that his testing and extending of the arguments is done in just the same way while the lecture is going on as it would be after it is over. He may be talking to himself silently, scribbling notes, contemplating images, etc. He may not be

doing any of these things. So one might claim that "listening" was itself a neutral and non-mental X-ing.

The listener may be simply monitoring what the lecturer is saying, simply trying to follow the argument. And one might argue that "monitoring" or "following" are built in to "listening" in a way that "testing" is not. If someone is apparently listening, but does not respond at all to what he hears, either then or later, we have grounds for saying that he wasn't really listening or at least that he wasn't listening properly. And this may be enough to prevent it being a "neutral and non-mental X-ing."

Monitoring something is not a matter of doing anything in particular. It is a matter of being prepared to react (appropriately) to certain changes in the situation. A man who is monitoring something, like a man who is guarding something, or waiting for something, may be doing almost anything else. The only restrictions are that whatever else he is doing should not interfere with his ability to perceive and react to the relevant changes. There are no lower-level X-ings that belong specifically to monitorings, guardings or waitings. The hierarchy is not built up in the way that it is in cases like those of turning on the light or signalling for help. So we need not expect to find any constituents in the case of the monitoring listener. Following an argument is not like following a path or a leader. Following an argument is a matter of grasping its stages as they are presented and understanding it as a whole. But understanding something is not a matter of doing something. It is a matter of being able to do a wide variety of things on appropriate occasions. So I do not see that we can conclude that Ryle's programme is wrong from this case. Either listening is a neutral X-ing, or what is special about listening is just what is special about monitoring,

guarding or waiting.

But perhaps the most fundamental point, and one that has implications for both Sibley and Ryle, comes from my discussion of basic actions. For Sibley's comment is too simple, even if it is not wrong. For he claims that the autonomous X-ings cannot be either mental or positively non-mental. Not the former, because that would be circular, and not the latter because "Ryle's adverbs cannot qualify physical processes like sweating and twitching." But a very similar dilemma occurs when we discuss basic actions. For the constituent events of actions cannot be positively actions, since that would be circular; nor yet can they be positively not actions, since sweating or twitching cannot be intended in the required sense. It is actions that are intended or unintended; movements are neither. That difficulty is resolved partly by saying that, since there was no role in our lives for a "purely neutral description", there was not one. Yet it did seem that the description of action in terms of physical movements could be pressed into service in order to make the metaphysical point that the difference between actions and events did not lie in actions including or being caused by a non-physical event.

If that move is acceptable, we can say that Sibley's dilemma is a false one. A basic action may be said, for certain purposes, to consist in movements, muscle contractions, electro-chemical processes and the like. So we may allow "listening" to consist of physical states or processes, or, for that matter, their absence.

Sibley has not identified the fundamental objection. But there are serious difficulties about finding appropriate "autonomous and neutral X-ings." I shall return to the problem.

P.T. Geach, in an article called "What do

we think with?" (in "God and the Soul",) claims that thinking is a basic activity. He also argues that "the activity of thinking cannot be assigned a position in the physical time-series," and consequently that "materialism" is false. It follows then that he would reject the idea that thinking (listening) might be said to consist of physical states or processes. There are very good reasons for treating this idea, and the notion "consist of..." with great caution. Some of them have appeared, and others will appear in this thesis.

Geach says on p.34:-

"...It seems to me that thinking is a basic activity....If anyone holds otherwise, it is up to him to give an account of thinking as a non-basic activity. I know of no such account that is remotely plausible. Perhaps someone might hold that in a given context to think certain thoughts is to have certain images, feelings, unspoken words, etc., passing through one's mind; but there are fairly obvious objections - in particular that on many occasions there seems to occur nothing of the sort that could be relevant."

Geach is a little cavalier with his opposition here. I am not quite clear why the burden of proof falls on those who claim that thinking is a non-basic activity. Geach objects to the candidates that he mentions and that I have been discussing. But the most that could follow is that thinking is not always a non-basic activity. And that would be my own position. There are very many different cases, and there is no special reason to suppose that they are all alike. But what of these occasions where nothing of the sort that could be relevant seems to occur? We are not given an example, so there is little direct evidence of what Geach has in mind. I cannot think of a clear case. The nearest I can get is this one. The contender in a quiz competition may pause before he answers the question. And he may not in that pause say anything to himself, have any images or whatever. Whether or not he does, we may say that he paused in

thought, that he was thinking or trying to remember the answer. Since nothing happened in the pause, we have some reason for rejecting these descriptions, save as façon de parler. It might be more accurate to say simply that he paused, and then answered. But the case is not obviously wrong, so it will serve. It still does not show that Geach is right. A diver may pause, stock-still, for a moment on the board before making his championship leap. It does not follow either that diving is a basic activity, or that preparing to dive is a basic activity.

There are grounds for suspecting that Geach has failed to bear in mind a distinction that he clearly would accept. He argues both that thinking is an activity, on the grounds that it can absorb us, "we can throw ourselves into it wholeheartedly, that we can be distracted from or that can distract us from other things." He could have added that we can spend all morning at it, be interrupted and so forth. But he also argues that thinking cannot be assigned a definite position in the physical time-series. Of course, many perfectly ordinary actions (and even some events - such as floods, storms, germination of seeds etc.) cannot be assigned a position that can be defined to any given limit of accuracy in the physical time-series. The paradox is resolved if we remember that "think" may be used in the same way as "believe." Not all thinking is an activity. And Geach shows that he recognizes this in his discussion of "understand" and "mean." It is difficult to believe that he could have been caught so simply. But he is not sufficiently explicit in his discussion for it to be quite clear that he has not.

This claim of Geach's represents one attempt to do without constituents of thinking. But it is important that we should find some or at least explain how we can do without. Attempts

to do without them lead to very weak positions. Geach's earlier book "Mental Acts" is vitiated by this lack, and Hampshire too falls foul of it in "Thought and Action." The following quotation is from the latter book, p. 163, 164.

"As my intention to act in a certain way is related to the overt act intended, so my belief at a particular moment that a statement is true is related to an affirmation of it. This relation can be rendered by representing the truncanted or arrested action, the momentary intention or belif, as a disposition to act, or publicly to affirm, in a certain way. Unfortunately the word 'disposition' has been used in too many different senses. The shadow-relation of mental act to full or genuine act can be better indicated by an analogy. Suppose a man is insulted: it may be said of him, metaphorically, that he 'looked daggers at his attacker' or that 'if looks could kill', his look would have done so. His expression was that of a man killing or striking, but he did not kill or strike. The real action was arrested and we saw only the shadow of it. One can suppose now that not only is the action inhibited, but the facial expression also; the man deliberately controls his face. Then the remainder is the mental content, the attitude or state of mind that constitutes the man's reaction to the insult. Similarly, having heard something said, I hold my tongue and I do not say 'No', as I am inclined to: what remains is my disbelief in what is said. If I had never had the power of saying 'No', and if I did not have the power of inhibiting my actions, it would never be right to attribute unexpressed beliefs to me."

Of course, Hampshire is right to emphasize the connection between my ability to perform 'public' acts and my mental life. But he has not got the connection right at all. Mental acts, according to Hampshire, are to be found after all publicly observable features have been cut away. Actions do occur in attenuated form, as the Cheshire cat occurred in attenuated forms. But when the Cheshire cat vanished, and all its observable features had disappeared, nobody said it was still there in any sense. But once the observable attack, or the observable denial has vanished, Hampshire tells us that

there is still something there, namely the mental attack or the mental denial. Ghosts indeed!

The obscurity of this account is simply this. We are led to look for constituents of mental acts by the comparison of mental, private acts with public acts. But at the same time we are denied any chance of finding constituents by the fact that mental acts are private.

The essence of Geach's account is presented in the following quotations from pp. 79 and 80 of "Mental Acts":-

"One of the most convincing analogy-theories of psychological concepts is the view that modes of description primarily applied to actual bits of written and spoken language are transferable to the role of describing the content of judgements - that which is judged. As I have remarked, in many languages the same oratio obliqua construction is used to report a man's words and to report his thoughts. But I would rather not appeal to this fact in my discussion of the 'interior language' analogy..... The primary role of oratio recta is certainly not psychological; it serves to report what somebody actually said or wrote. But oratio recta can be used metaphorically to report what somebody thought, 'said in his heart' (without, of course, implying that the thinker had the quoted words in his mind): such constructions are frequent in the Authorized Version of the Bible: 'The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no God'': 'They said in their heart 'Let us destroy them together''. Clearly we could always describe judgements by using oratio recta in this way; oratio obliqua is logically superfluous..... And here we have a clear case of a linguistic device whose psychological application is logically secondary to its application to sensible things - bits of actual written and spoken language."

What Geach says here is very attractive. But I think that we must ask two questions. First, what is the point of this "linguistic device?" Why do we need this transferred or analogical use? Second, in what respects is the transferred or analogical use supposed to be like the literal use? (Geach attacks the latter

question in cap. 17, on the grounds that it is bound up with the 'abstractionist' view of concept formation. But I think that my question does have an answer, ultimately, and that it is revealing.)

The difficulty that I want to raise is that the answer to the first question tells against our saying that the use is transferred or analogical. The answer that Geach suggests, and that we find also in Ryle (see below, on his article "A puzzling element in the notion of thinking") is that the point is to "describe" or, better, to give the content of judgements. But the point of the primary use, that is of oratio recta, is to "describe" or rather report, actual bits of written and spoken language. The difficulty about the transferred use is just that no actual bits of language are being described or reported. Geach is saying that judging is like saying, only without the constituents. But if the point or role of the two modes of description is different, and the constituents are different or simply absent, what analogy are we left with? Geach can be defended, but at some cost. And I shall return to him shortly. What is immediately important is the point that the lack of any natural constituents for thinking, or for the oratio obliqua mode of description - (description of what?) - leaves a serious gap and a central obscurity in Geach's account.

It seems that any account that does not offer some constituents of thinking will be open to objection on that score. There are, however arguments to the conclusion that we cannot expect to find any. But in developing these, it is also possible to show what account we ought to give of the matter. In fact, this process amounts to developing and perhaps clarifying Wittgenstein's remark in "Philosophical Investigations" II. 217 that "'Talking' (whether out loud or silently) and 'thinking' are not concepts of the

same kind; even though they are in closest connection."

In my discussion of executive actions, I adopted a simple view of constituents. The constituents, or material elements, of actions were given by the appropriate "lower-level" descriptions, and the move to a "higher-level" description was justified mainly by reference to the purpose or point of the action - its formal element. Linguistic clues to the relationship were to be found in phrases like "He Y-ed, by X-ing" or "In Y-ing, he X-ed." There are many phrases that express this relationship, or at least that express relationships of this kind. For example, there is "To X in circumstances A, is to Y" - where intending to Y, or "in order to Y" are permitted values for "A". Other phrases are "X-ing counts as Y-ing, if A," "Y-ing consists of X-ing, when A", "X-ing in order to Y, is Y-ing" or "Redescription of X-ing as Y-ing is justified by A," and so forth.

These linguistic forms can conceal important differences. For example, these forms fit the case of "hurrying" that I discussed earlier. But, as I argued then, the case of "hurrying" is sufficiently different for it to be reasonable to say that hurrying does not have constituents, at least not in the way that turning on the light does.

But there are autonomous and neutral X-ings in the case of hurrying - the running, the movement of the legs and arms and so forth, even if these are not to be called constituents. And these autonomous and neutral X-ings enable us to avoid metaphysical puzzles about ghostly existences, not only in the case of hurrying, but also in the case of the thinking involved in executive actions. The puzzles are avoided by the account I have given of verbs like these in our language.

But these notions, of "constituent" and of

"adverbial verb," with their implied models, are too simple to provide an acceptable account of what thinking is in cases like those of le Penseur and of Euclid. There is a large and varied vocabulary involved here, and these models do apply to some cases. But the central role of some of the relevant vocabulary escapes these models, at least as they have been developed so far.

The linguistic forms I mentioned earlier do not apply in these cases. Le Penseur does not mutter in order to think; Euclid does not solve his problem in drawing figures in the sand, as in cutting the tape, he might have opened the bridge. Nor does the scientist, if he is asked "How did you solve the equation?" say that he solved it by uttering certain words or making certain marks, as if they were an incantation. Pondering or solving equations might plausibly be said to have constituents; muttering to oneself, scribbling, doodling, wriggling in one's chair, pacing up and down or sitting still are examples of the kind of X-ings that Ryle has in mind. These candidates do not fit naturally into the linguistic forms. But this kind of vocabulary does not allow us to describe the course of le Penseur's ponderings. To do that, we need a different vocabulary, in which we can describe le Penseur as surveying the evidence, assessing a hypothesis, examining or weighing an argument, and accepting a conclusion. And the question what <u>these</u> things consist in is exactly the question that the traditional discussions started with.

Curiously enough, Ryle provides another argument to the same conclusion, and a first suggestion of another role for these words. The following quotation comes from "<u>A Puzzling Element in the notion of Thinking.</u>"

"To take a simple instance. A rowing enthusiast says that he had been thinking about the Oxford University crew; and if asked bluntly, would deny that he had at that moment been thinking about the Cambridge

crew. Yet it might transpire that his thought about the Oxford crew was, or included, the thought that, though it was progressing, it was not progressing fast enough. 'Not fast enough for what?' we ask. 'Not fast enough to beat Cambridge next Saturday.' So he had been thinking about the Cambridge crew, only thinking about it in a sort of threshold way ..... Recounting one's thoughts is not like turning back to an earlier page and trying to give an exhaustive inventory of the items one rediscovers there. The question whether or not the Cambridge crew had been in the rowing-enthusiast's mind was not one he could settle by racking his brains to recollect a bygone fleeting something. In our example it was settled in quite a different way, namely by asking him what the rate of progress of the Oxford crew had seemed to him inadequate for. When he acknowledges that he had been, in a threshold way, thinking of the Cambridge crew, one thing he does not say is, 'Ah, yes, your question reminds me that the Cambridge crew was in my thoughts after all.' He had not been reminded of a forgotten item but shown how his account of his thought had been an incomplete account. He had failed to indicate part of its internal tenor."

A closely related point emerges in the defence of Geach against my earlier attack. When we report "what people say," we are not just describing or reporting actual bits of written and spoken language, but also reporting the content of their judgements. And the transferred or analogical use consists in our using language for one of these purposes without the other. And, as a first move towards explaining what this amounts to, and towards explaining what justifies applying particular terms on particular occasions, we can refer to what I said earlier about actions. In the examples that Geach gives, the quoted sentences are being used, (or are capable of being used) to explain what these people are doing, or explaining what God is doing, or going to do to them. In short, these sentences give reasons for what people do. (Reporting what people said - the noises they made - is not obviously giving any reasons for what they do.)

Now, the quotation from Ryle shows that there is a use of "entertain" in which it is wrong to say that entertaining propositions has constituents at all. Another word that is also part of the traditional account of belief is "accept".

Price says:-

"Assent is the culmination as it were, of a process: we might almost say, the resolution of a kind of conflict."

But, of course, there are not any obvious candidates for the role of constituents of accepting. We might say that "accepting" is an achievement word, like "winning." "Winning" not only explains the point of other activities, such as "running a race," "playing chess," etc. but also does not have any special constituents of its own. Winning a race does not involve doing anything that one does not do at any other time in the race. In one sense of "doing something," it does not involve doing anything at all, since "winning" is not a process. One can say "has won" as soon as one can say "is winning". "Is winning" may be an unhappy synonym for "is leading" or "should win with best play." But one cannot say "is in the middle of winning" at all.

"Accepting a proposition" is in some ways like "winning." We might say, as Ryle says of the not unrelated word "perceiving," in "Dilemmas":-

"The point is that where winning is the scoring of an athletic success, perceiving is the scoring of an investigational success." (pg. 109).

We may see accepting a proposition as a terminus, though not necessarily a successful terminus, to an investigation. Of course, we do not always investigate before accepting a proposition - it is odd even to say that perceiving is related to any kind of investigation. But the analogy may be a helpful one in avoiding certain kinds of mistake; for example, the mistake that Ryle is concerned to expose in "Dilemmas."

But the analogy does not really take us very far. "Winning" is fairly clearly defined in each of its contexts. The first man past the post has won (roughly) - and so on. And in that sense, winning does consist of something - though not a physiological or psychological state. It consists of getting past the post first. But, so far as I can see, there need be no similar criteria for the accepting of a proposition. No words need be uttered, no actions performed or stopped, to justify us in saying that someone has accepted a proposition, at least in the very wide sense of "accept" that is in question here. What we have to look to is, so to speak, the status of that particular proposition in what the person says and does. A proposition that is merely entertained, in the traditional sense, will not figure as true, but merely as possibly true. A proposition that has been accepted will figure as a true proposition in whatever the accepter says and/or does. And that means, roughly, that a proposition that has been accepted may be a reason for saying or doing something. This change in status may be marked, but equally it may not be marked. One can mark one's acceptance of a proposition in many ways. The most formal or explicit way is to say "I accept that p." Simply saying "p", or grunting, are less formal ways of accepting a proposition.

To see that there does not have to be anything that marks the moment when the proposition is accepted, compare "taking control" - where this is taking control of an organization. This may be marked by some ceremony of handing over - and it often is. But when a new head takes control he may simply start to do those things which his being in control entitles him to do, without any ceremony or event to mark when his control began. It may even be a gradual process, with the new man doing only some of the appropriate things, and gradually doing more and more of them until he is doing them all. So there need be no mark

of the new status of a proposition; it may be that it simply starts occurring as a reason for things done and said.

The similarity between "accepting a proposition" and "winning a race" may be explained by the fact that winning a race or a battle also involves a change of status of the person or side that has won. What the change is depends on what kind of victory it was. The difference is that, for most of the purposes that we use "winning," it is important that the change should be marked.

So there is my alternative account for "believes" and some of its cognates. There is no need to look for a hierarchy of descriptions of the kind that we find in other cases. It is tempting and not altogether unfair to say that my position is that the role of "believes" is to identify what the believer is treating as true, or to identify what has the status of being a truth in his thinkings and his doings. And one can immediately object that there is a difference between someone treating something as true and his believing it. It is quite possible to treat something as true without believing it. There is a move against the behaviourist account of belief that is reminiscent of this one; and my response is essentially the same. There the objection was that it is possible for someone to behave as if he believed that p without really believing it. This is what happens in cases of hypocrisy, for example. The reply there was that in such cases there will be occasions on which the hypocrite reveals his beliefs, or on which he would reveal them. Similarly, the reply now is that if someone is merely treating p as true (for the sake of the argument, for example,) there will be occasions when he would not be prepared to do so, if they arise, as when he is asked to stake his life that p is true. But there is some force to the objection. The two phrases "treat p as true" and "believe that p" are not equivalent. They mark a useful, and sometimes an important, distinction.

If p is true, it can be a premiss in an argument whose conclusion will be true, if the argument is valid. It can be a reason for or against doing something, an objection, a counter-example and so on. If p is false, it can sometimes fulfil these roles, but only by our using the device of supposing them to be true. Sometimes, people use a proposition in these ways, when the proposition is false. "Believes" allows us to describe what has happened without our contradicting ourselves. Thus it performs the same role here as it does in context of executive actions. There is no paraphrase of this. But then we do not need one, save for the convenience of philosophers. And for that purpose "treat p as true" or "having the status of a truth" may serve, provided we remember the cautions.

It is worth returning to Bernard Mayo's dilemma. I said that there was something wrong with the question "How do we advance from or distinguish 'entertaining' from 'believing'?" I suggested that the dilemma was valid against the traditional account of these mental acts. But in the everyday sense, the dilemma must be a nonsense; for we do sometimes consider questions and then make up our minds about them. How? Well, the only way in which this could be answered is by explaining about argument, evidence and proof. This will not give one answer, but many answers, to the question. Different kinds of question are answered in different ways. Theories and conclusions are established by different techniques in different fields. It is because Mayo's dilemma seems to apply to this "everyday" question that it seems to prove too much.

But the dilemma has no force against my account. "How do we distinguish entertaining p from believing it?" Does S rely on p in what he does? Does he use it as an objection? Does he draw conclusions from it, without caution or hesitation? Then we have grounds for saying that he believes it. Does he try to find arguments with either p or not-p as a conclusion? Is p a supposition or a possibility for him? Then we have

grounds for saying that he (merely) entertains it. "How do we advance from entertaining p to believing it?" One answer is this. Advancing from entertaining to believing is not like advancing from Paris to Brussels. It is more like advancing from corporal to sergeant, or from assistant to head. There may be a "way" in which this kind of advancement happens or there may not. Another answer is this. The only way in which we could understand the question is as a request for an explanation of the notions of argument, evidence and proof. And here there are many answers to be given.

5. Objects of thought

Consider an example that, at first sight at least, seems to favour Ryle's account. On closer examination, however, it turns out not to. This is the example of a man composing a piece of music. He is thinking, pondering or reflecting. He is composing a piece of music. At another level, he is making marks on a piece of paper, sighing, groaning, scratching his head etc. His composing a piece of music, rather than his designing a yacht, drawing a picture or performing a mathematical calculation, lies in two points. First, that the marks he is making are notes - musical notes - and second that he intends that these notes should be played as a piece of music; so Ryle might say. What makes the marks he is making into notes, as opposed to letters or numbers, is the fact that the marks are part of a set of conventions which enable them to function as instructions to musicians. So far, Ryle's account is perfectly adequate. We say that a man who is writing down notes is composing, roughly because he is not copying the notes and not writing them down from memory, because, not only are they his own notes, but a piece of music. This amounts to saying that his reasons and intentions in making one mark rather than another are of a certain kind, and that his criteria of success are of a certain kind. And, of course, he is relying on an exceedingly complicated collection of practices and conventions and facts about the world, and about music, in doing this. So composing is one example of thinking, and composing consists sometimes (not necessarily always) of making marks on a piece of paper in accordance with certain rules and with certain intentions.

But on closer inspection this will not really do. The pyramid of descriptions involved here can plausibly be built on the description "writing notes." It cannot be built in the same way on "making marks." And the latter is the candidate for the next lowest level of description after "writing notes." The two activities of making marks on

a piece of paper and composing are of different kinds. They have distinct objects. The maker of marks on a piece of paper is concerned with paper, pen and ink. The composer is not interested in any of these things. The composer's interest is in notes, keys, chords, expression, themes, statements, developments, recapitulations and the like. The question what these consist in does not have a straightforward answer. But they are not just marks on a piece of paper.

It is tempting to suggest that the composer's intentions, criteria of success and thoughts of future activities are what make the difference. But this will not do. What are these intentions exactly? Clearly he does intend that people should play those notes. Then the marks are orders or instructions. But orders or instructions to do what, exactly? If we say "to play certain notes," we must then say what the notes consist in. And notes are not simply sounds, much less marks. At least in much music a note is part of a complicated structure and is defined by its relation to other notes. Not just any sound can be fitted in to this structure. So a note is not just a sound, nor is it just part of a sound-system; it is part of a system of some sounds. We cannot say which sounds can and which cannot be fitted in to the system without specifying the system. But specifying the system must involve introducing the learner to musical activities, and to some degree initiating him in to them.

We might say that the composer is instructing the musician to do something with his instrument - to place his fingers so, to press certain keys. But since he may well not know how to play the instrument, we can say only that the instruction is to do "whatever will produce the note X." Understanding the relation between what the composer is now doing and the future performance of the piece is crucial to understanding that he is composing. But this relation does not allow us to give

an appropriate neutral specification of the constituent activities.

It isn't only the composer's intentions that we cannot give without referring to musical objects. How are we to say what his criteria of success are? For the question how well or ill he composes has nothing - within limits - to do with the question how well or ill he makes marks on a piece of paper. A skilled composer is not skilled at any specialized calligraphy; he need not be able to write down his music at all, or be able to sing well, or know all about the theory of music. Contrast cases like driving or playing football, where skill at performing the relevant constituent activities is relevant to success at driving or footballing.

We cannot even say that what the composer writes and what the musician plays are the same (notes or piece of music). The appropriate criteria of identity are carried by "note" and not by "mark" or "sound". And, of course, it is essential to the point of what both composer and musician do that what the composer writes and what the musician plays should be the same.

Composing does fit Ryle's account, in some ways; it is partly parasitic on the intentions of the composer. But the simple form of pyramiding descriptions that Ryle began with cannot cater for this example satisfactorily - even if we include reference to future activities or actions that are not now being performed, and that will not be performed by the present agent.

The trouble here is closely related to the trouble that has been discussed earlier, as it was raised by Sibley. This amounts to the problem of finding the right kind of constituents for the activities. Describing a man as making marks on paper does not just leave out the point of what he is doing, in the way required by the model of the hierarchy of descriptions. It suggests a wholly different set of criteria of success

and/or reasons for doing things, from those that are suggested when we describe him as writing notes on a piece of paper, or as composing. The difference does not, of course, lie in any of his physical movements, but nor does it lie simply in his intentions, reasons and criteria of success. For these cannot be specified without reference to music and to musical objects such as notes, melodies, themes, chords, modulations, cadences and so forth.

These problems arise in other cases of thinking too. They arise when le Penseur is concerned not with themes or chords but with arguments or ideas; they even arise when the concern is with sentences, words or phrases; they certainly arise in the case of Euclid's worrying about figures or numbers.

The latter case provides another context in which related points can be made. There are two points that make calculating special. One is, that the processes of calculation have a special status in relation to the answers that they produce. If the processes are correctly carried out, the correctness of the answer is logically guaranteed. And this is not true of other ways of finding answers. Consequently, it is perhaps most plausible to say that the thinking involved in calculating consists just of going through the steps of the calculation in the right sequence; one may sometimes find the answer in other ways, but this way is of central importance, because it defines what correctness is. And this point applies also to proving in general in mathematics and logic.

But this approach runs into the same difficulty that I tried to bring out in the case of the composer. There is not the same temptation to regard the relevant marks or noises as instructions, or as parasitic on any particular later actions. So perhaps the point is in some ways clearer. In the case of a proof, each step is not just a series of marks on a piece of paper, but has its place as a reason in the

argument. Each step is a justification for the next, or part of the justification for some later step. In the case of a calculation, each step is a stage in working out what the answer is, and is part of the justification of the answer when it is reached. If we simply describe the mathematician as making marks on a piece of paper, we neglect this point, that those "marks" have a certain status or role within the activity of proving, calculating or arguing. But one mark cannot be a reason for another mark. Moreover, the criteria of sameness and difference, (i.e. of identity) for marks are not the same as those for "numbers," "figures," "diagrams" or "symbols" and it is the latter that the mathematician is manipulating or operating upon.

Saying that "calculating" or "proving" consists of operations on marks may have a metaphysical point, as a denial that it consists of anything else. At least, without the making of marks, neither calculations nor proofs can be carried out. But insisting on this obscures the crucially important point that the steps and operations are related as reasons. If they are not so related, then we have a case of doodling, not a case of calculating.

So we cannot give way to the temptation without at least saying a good deal more.

The difficulty about finding constituents of these activities is closely bound up with the special nature of their objects. The difficulty springs from two sources, which have the consequence that the objects of the activities are not logically independent of the activities. One is the criterion of success, or the point of the activity; and the other is the use or role of the objects. Either of these may make it impossible to give constituents of the objects, and so impossible to give constituents of the relevant activities. The objects that we may want to identify as constituents of the activities

carry with them different criteria of success, and different criteria of identity, and may be bound up with different activities.

This applies to the kind of case of thinking that we are centrally concerned with. Prior starts his book "Objects of Thought" thus:

"The phrase 'object of thought' may be used in two very different ways. An object of thought may be (1) what we think, or (2) what we think about; e.g. if we think that grass is green, (1) what we think is that grass is green, and (2) what we think about is grass. 'Objects of thought' in the first sense are Ryle's 'accusatives of belief'; they are sometimes called 'propositions', not in the sense of sentences, but in the sense of what sentences mean."

Outside philosophy seminars we do not often talk of propositions as the objects of thought - Prior's sense (1). What people think about in this sense is (or are) ideas, hypotheses, suggestions, theories, assumptions, results, observations, conclusions, reminders, evidence, arguments and so on and so forth. "Proposition" is a portmanteau word covering all of these. And here again, it is easy to see that if we regard these as simply sentences or sets of sentences, the point of the terms is lost. As I have said, to describe someone as having accepted a proposition is, in essence, to say that the relevant proposition will have a certain status, or play a certain role in what he does and says. But all of these terms for objects of thought attribute some status or other to the relevant propositions. One and the same proposition can be now an idea, now a suggestion, nor an assumption, now a conclusion, now evidence and so forth. But sentences are not not fitted to this kind of transformation.

We can see in the arguments for 'abstractism'(*)

(*) this term is used by Williamson in "Propositions and Abstract Propositions" to identify the view about propositions that he is opposed to, that propositions are not sentences at all, but are some other kind of thing or object, namely an abstract thing or object.

what the point of the notion of 'propositions' is, and the point of distinguishing them from sentences. Roughly, to talk about "the proposition that the sun is hot" as opposed to the sentence "the sun is hot" is to show what my interest is when I say "The sun is hot." If I talk about the proposition, then I am engaging in certain sorts of activity. What is distinctive about them roughly is that the criterion of success is truth. If I talk about sentences, then I am engaging in certain other kinds of activity, such as philology or literary criticism or crosswords, etc. etc. One might compare the situation in which the "same" object was at one time a globe (model of the world) and at another a football. In that case, we would have a description of the object which would be neutral between the descriptions that apply to it when it appears in the contexts of these two activities; and that would be, probably, "sphere." And because we have that description, we could identify the object as the same in the two different contexts. But even the description "sphere" is not really independent of all activities. One problem that we face in the case of propositions as against sentences is that we have no such neutral description. For "sentence" is related to the jobs of a compositor or grammarian or literary critic, for examples. "Proposition" is related to different activities such as arguing, inferring, deducing, discovering, proving etc. etc., and to the attendant notions of truth, reason and meaning.

"Objects of thought" - that is, ideas, theories, conclusions, evidence, etc. - are assessed as absurd or reasonable, as exaggerated or accurate, as ill-conceived, well-founded, reliable, valid, surprising, relevant etc. Even if it is not clear whether we can say that sentences are true or false without absurdity, none of these other assessments can be made of sentences. Sentences are open to assessment in very different ways, as long or short, as well-turned, expressive, awkward and so forth; and we do not assess ideas in those particular ways.

In "Propositions and Abstract Propositions," Colwyn Williamson says:

"I should like to feel that it is obvious that a proposition is a sentence. A proposition is not 'expressed,' 'denoted,' or 'meant' by a sentence; it is a sentence. A proposition is a sentence in the sense in which an axe is a piece of metal attached to a length of wood. This is all there is to a proposition in the way in which this is all there is to an axe. And a proposition is not just a sentence in the way in which an axe is not just the metal and wood of which it is made. But to establish the substance of the proposition is merely a preliminary to the real task, which is to attain some clarity about what it is that makes a sentence a proposition."

Williamson's task or question can fairly be described as finding or describing the formal element of the notion of a proposition. "What is it that makes a sentence a proposition?" is parallel to "What is it that makes this wood and metal an axe?" And in some sense the answers to both questions are presumably to be found in the same way, by looking to the use or function of the sentence or the wood and metal. And this leads to considering the activities and practices in which sentences (or wood and metal) are involved.

It is easy to see that a given object may be classified in one way rather than another at different times. The same object may be now a cricket stump, now a baseball bat, now a paperweight, now a boundary marker, depending on the use to which it is put. One object might be a globe, a football, or buoyancy in a boat. These changes are related to the different interests we have at different times, and the different activities that we go in for at different times. It would be neat and tidy if we could say that the relationship between propositions and sentences was like that. So that the parallel between "What makes this sentence a proposition?" and "What makes this bit of wood and metal an axe?" would lead to an answer to our question. But the parallel does not really go through. The criteria of identity do not overlap in the right way. One

axe may consist of a particular bit of wood and a particular bit of metal; it will not be the same axe as the axe that consists of some other bits of wood and metal, or the one that is made of different kinds of metal (bronze, iron, steel, zinc) or even different materials (stone) and different kinds of wood or other material. But the sentence "x is smaller than y" seems to 'be' the very same proposition as "y is bigger than x" (and the translations into different languages).

A suitable piece of metal can be described as a bit of an axe. But no collection of words can be described as a bit of a proposition; one may doubt whether a proposition can be said to have bits at all. While a sentence can be said to have bits; and a suitable collection of words can be described as a bit of a sentence.

At the same time, of course, if we are to go in for the relevant activities at all, there must be some words or other that are closely related to the relevant propositions. The difficulties involved in separating propositions from sentences are very well known. See, for example, Colwyn Williamson's acrticle, or "Sentences, Statements and Propositions" by E.J. Lemmon (in "Contemporary British Philosophy" ed. Williams and Montefiore.)

We could try another analogy. An arrangement of objects does not consist of the collection of those objects; yet an arrangement must be of some objects or other. We cannot say that the arrangement of the objects is some thing over and above the objects arranged. Without the objects, there can be no arrangement of them. So we might say that a proposition was an arrangement of words. And we could distinguish propositions and sentences by saying that the criterion for "same arrangement" was different in the two cases. But it is very odd to say that "x is smaller than y" is the same arrangement of words as "y is bigger than x," or to say that "I think, therefore I am" and "Cogito ergo

sum" are the same arrangement of words. Even if the idea is still tempting, we are left with the question what words consist in. We cannot say that they consist in arrangements of noises or of letters, for reasons similar to the reasons why we could not say that musical notes were marks.

Why can we not find any neutral description to complete the parallel with the sphere/globe/football case? The criteria of sameness and difference for sentences are wholly irrelevant and wholly inappropriate to such activities as investigating analysing, proving or concluding. For the purpose of printer, proof-reader, and linguist and for some of the purposes of poets and authors generally, the criteria of identity inherent in the notion of a sentence are well adapted. But these criteria of identity do not at all suit a translator, a scientist or a reporter. These men need different criteria of identity, of sameness and difference in the 'material' that they work on, namely those inherent in the notion of a proposition. In the case of the sphere/globe/football, the different criteria of identity are independent of each other; but they do overlap. The different criteria of identity do not overlap in the case of "proposition" and "sentence"; hence the temptation to 'abstractism'.

A full explanation of this relation between propositions and sentences would take me too far afield for my present purposes. I am not altogether sure that I can give one that is really satisfactory. But it is clear both that the connection between sentences and propositions is close and that there is no simple analogy that will clarify it. Yet there may be a metaphysical point to insisting that there is a relation and that a proposition is not an entity ontologically separate from sentences. I take it that this is what Williamson is after in saying that the "substance" of a proposition is a sentence, and also part of what Prior, for example, is after in saying that a proposition is a "logical

construction" - (see "Objects of Thought" chapter 1.) Abstractism, understood as a claim about the substance of propositions, does not hold up. But any account of the relationship between propositions, sentences and marks must take account of the role of the notion of proposition and, more important, of all the other notions for which 'proposition' is a portmanteau.

My suggestion here amounts to this. The notion of a proposition carried with it certain criteria of identity and ways of evaluation of what people say and do. It is 'constructed' as the object of certain activities - roughly, those which have truth as essential to their point. So what I have said is concerned with such activities, my conclusion may be your hypothesis; your evidence may be my observation; what is a reminder to you may be a suggestion to me. And we may describe the same stretch of speech or writing in these different ways.

The role of belief and of "believes" must be seen in this context. These concepts ~~fit~~ will fit ~~will~~ the function of identifying propositions which have the status of being true in the believer's sayings and doings, without committing the speaker to an opinion of his own. While "knows" does commit the speaker, and "thinks" does as well, at least in some contexts.

Prior's sense (2) of 'object of thought' is the sense in which "what we think about is grass". The central problem about this sense is well stated on pg. 127 of "Objects of Thought".

"..... For it just isn't easy to hold together the following two propositions:-

(1) that when X thinks of Y, aims at Y, worships Y, etc., there is always a Y involved as well as an X.

(2) that in some cases, when X thinks of Y, etc., there is no Y there at all.

"Or at least it isn't easy to hold them together and at the same time to reject all of the following moves which might make them consistent:

(a) that thinking of an unreal object is quite a different sort of activity from thinking of a real one.

(b) that in thinking of anything at all, we thereby put ourselves into a relation, not with that that thing, but only with an 'idea' or what-have-you which in favourable cases may 'represent' a real thing but in unfavourable cases does not.

(c) that there are strong and weak kinds of reality or being, such that all objects of thought whatever possess at least the weak sort while only a favoured sub-class possesses the strong sort."

My claim about belief (and the related vocabulary) is not just that move (b) is wrong, as well as moves (a) and (c). These apparently incompatible propositions express a fundamental part of the logic of these words, and the task is to show that they are not incompatible. I have tried to do this for "executive actions" by showing how a need for a word with the logical properties of "believes" is central to the way in which we think and talk about them. I have also tried to show how the special "objects" of thought are dependent on thinking activities, and vice versa.

I hope that I have now said enough to make it clear that the traditional theory, in fastening on "entertain", "accept", and "proposition", fastened on notions that are central to "believes". To make this vocabulary acceptable it is necessary to bring out clearly the role of these words in the language and to resolve the difficulty about finding constituents, or identifying the lower-level descriptions of these activities, by showing that the demand for them is not legitimate.

The mistakes in the traditional theory are in thinking that believing something must consist in a relation of the believer to something else, or that it was a state of the believer. Moore spotted the first mistake; and I have already quoted his argument. But it is equally mistaken to think of belief as a state of the believer's mind; for that too

deprives the word of its role in the language. If believing is a state of the believer's mind, we are again left without a way of carrying out the role that I assign to "believes". It is not that belief is a state related to a "fact" - or to a would-be fact - but rather the point of "believes" is to identify those facts or would-be facts to which other states and actions of the believer are or would be related. The would-be relations may be the relation of being a reason for ... (or against ....) or it may be that the states or actions may aspire to the status of being true, or of discovering or producing something true.

I am placing a lot of the weight of explanation here on the notion of truth. And one may well ask whether it can bear all that weight. But I am not committed to the view that truth is independent of these various activities; nor do I accept it. On the contrary, truth is conceptually dependent on these activities, just as musical criteria and objects are dependent on musical activities. The position that I am committed to is that the relation is "hen-and-egg." Neither comes first; both must be grasped together. Musical criteria and musical objects cannot be explained without reference to musical activities. But musical activities cannot be understood without some grasp of musical criteria and musical objects. Similarly the relevant thinking activities cannot be understood without some grasp of the objects of thought and the appropriate criteria of success - which essentially involve truth. Equally the criteria of success and the objects of thought cannot be explained without reference to the appropriate activities. We learn about these things by being initiated into them by others.

6. Belief and reasons

In "Reason in Theory and Practice" Roy Edgeley attributes to belief and "believes" a role that certainly seems incompatible with my account. In chap. 3/22 (pg. 89) he takes issue with Hampshire's claim that "I believe that p" is wholly normative. He says:

"This would certainly explain how there can be no first-person equivalent of 'it is wrong to think that p, but he thinks that p.' But it would also undermine the view that I have been relying on, that 'believe' is essentially, in all of its uses, a descriptive psychological verb...."

At its weakest, this phrase could mean no more than "a verb that is truly or falsely applied to people." It is true that a sentence whose main verb is "believes" is true or false, if significant. But that is even compatible with Hampshire's view; at least prima facie it seems significant to say "It is true that I ought not to take this..." But Edgeley is committed to a stronger view than that. On pg. 92 he says:

".....having the concept of belief (like having the concept of pain) presupposes abilities and tendencies to express belief (pain). In the case of belief, this ability is the ability to answer questions of the fourth type (sc. 'Is it the case that p?')"

It isn't very clear what relation is intended by "presupposes"; so this isn't a straightforward dispositional account of belief. But then neither is it very clear just what the account is.

In cap. 3.1, Edgeley refers to "what the psychological concepts designate." This seems to be yet stronger, because it isn't obvious that dispositional terms do or could designate anything. (If they did, surely that would have to be an

actual thing....) It would not be fair to build too much into an odd phrase or sentence. Edgeley is rather elusive on this point. Nonetheless a strong interpretation of "descriptive psychological verb" is indicated by what he says about the role of "believes" in the language.

Edgeley approaches the topic from a point of view that is different from mine. He is concerned with practical reasons, with the bearing of reason on actions and with the relations between theoretical and practical reason. It is not possible to summarize, much less to criticise adequately, his careful and thorough book here. I am not concerned here with his wider claims, but only with what he says about belief. I may be doing violence to the book by concentrating on one aspect of it out of its context. But I do not think so.

In the following quotation, one role that he attributes to belief, and the reason why that role appears incompatible with my account emerges clearly. The quotation is from p. 104 ff.

"But we can mark off the relation we are interested in by saying that in this relation the idea of a reason <u>for</u> is contrasted with the idea of a reason <u>against</u>. Now: what terms can this relation have? The first term is always a fact or something asserted to be true; that p, or the fact that p; these are in general the sorts of things that can be reasons..... A reason for something is anything that can be said in its favour. But what items can we say things for in this way? What sorts of things can reasons be reasons for?.....even in the most favoured case this term itself is in a different category from the first term: unlike the reason itself it is not that <u>so-and-so</u>..... The phrase 'the fact that p is a reason for....' can be completed by phrastics of many kinds: not only by verbal nouns of belief, such as 'thinking, holding, supposing, contending, denying, concluding, accepting, rejecting, maintaining, claiming that q,' but also by verbal nouns of action....and....of feeling, emotion, attitude and mood...."

So thinking (believing) that p must be a distinct state of the believer. Thinking (believing) that p is in a different category from the fact that p. For this purpose it is in the same category as the other kinds of verbal noun that he mentions. And if "being a reason for..." or "against..." is a relation, it seems natural to suppose that it holds between distinct items.

There is one important point that Edgeley has got right there. My problem is to show that what he has got right does not entail the conclusion that I want to reject, but that it is at least compatible with my account of belief. The relevant discussion is to be found in chapter 3. He compiles two lists - A and B.

A	B
(1) 'p' implies 'q'	(1) The argument or inference from 'p' to 'q' is valid, not invalid, sound, not unsound, acceptable not unacceptable, a good, not a bad argument.
(2) If p then q	(2) From the fact that p one can (legitimately or correctly) argue, infer, deduce or conclude that q.
(3) 'q' follows from 'p'	(3) The fact that p is a (conclusive) reason for thinking that q.
	(5) It's right not wrong, correct not mistaken to think that q, because p.
	(6) It is inconsistent to think that p and at the same time think that not-q.

Edgeley says of these lists (pg. 50):

"There are two questions: first are the items of List A distinguishable from those of List B; and if so, second, is there any necessary connection between them? The prima facie answer to both of these

questions is 'Yes.' List A contains truths of reason, some instances of which would be analytic, A.1, e.g., asserting that the logical relation of implication holds between two propositions or propositional formulae. In contrast, List B is a list of appraisals, which contain both evaluative and psychological concepts, the evaluative concepts being used in the appraisal of what the psychological concepts designate, actual or possible arguments, inferences, deductions, conclusions or beliefs; under this interpretation, B1, for instance, could be regarded as a normative rule, a rule of inference. Yet between the items in these two lists, there seems to be a strong logical connection: if A 1-4, then B 1 and B 6, and if A 1-4, and it is the case that p (whether this is itself analytic, descriptive or evaluative), then B 2 - 5. This prima facie answer gives a partial elucidation of the view that logical principles are 'Laws of Thought': they are not psychological laws, but principles necessarily having a normative bearing on the psychological states of people."

The basic defence of Edgeley's point, to my mind, is this. We do argue, conclude, suppose and so forth. The criterion of success in these activities is conceptually linked to the notion of truth. One might say in summary that arguments are successful if they enable us to reach true conclusions. But that neglects the distinction between truth and validity. It is some sort of success to establish a valid argument, even if its conclusion is false. But the notion of validity itself is conceptually linked to truth. A valid argument is one in which the truth of the conclusion is guaranteed provided that the premisses are true. The question of their truth has to be dealt with separately. The summary also neglects the point that reductio ad absurdum arguments, if they are successful, have false conclusions. But still, the point of constructing a reductio argument is to establish a truth, or to demonstrate that something is false. The point of arguing from the premiss that 2 has a rational square root to the absurd conclusion is to demonstrate that the square root of 2 cannot be a rational number. So the summary is defensible, as a summary.

Now, the links that Edgeley points out enable us to ensure that our arguments will be successful. There is no point to argument that is not conducted in accordance with the rules in List B; or at least, there is no point to argument that may not be criticized by appeal to these standards.

Edgeley distinguishes two senses of "reason." One is the relation of something's being a reason for something else; and this must be distinguished from another sense: "In the description of which the word 'reason' occurs in a similar construction, as when we say that something is a (or the) reason why something is so, e.g., the fact that the pressure is low is the reason why the weather is wet. With respect to the second term of this relation a reason is purely explanatory, and the two relations are different. As Hume in effect half-saw in his account of causality, the difference is not a disconnection and there is no ground for supposing that the word 'reason' is ambiguous between these two uses." (p. 104).

The connection is very close. For this sense of "reason" generates rules. And these rules, (in which "reason" is used in the sense of "reason-for") are justified by reference to the explanations, (in which "reason" is used in the sense of "reason-why").

If the fact that the pressure is low is the reason why the weather is wet, then the fact that the pressure is low is a reason for thinking that the weather is/will be wet. Also, the fact that the weather is wet is a reason for thinking that the pressure is low. (But the fact that the weather is wet is not the reason why the pressure is low. And that shows that there is a distinction here.) When we use a case of the relation of "reason-why" in argument in this way, we call it "evidence."

In the case of analytic implications, there is again a close connection with arguments and inference. Given that

John is a bachelor, we are entitled to conclude that he is a male. If anyone is a bachelor, he is male; or ~~that~~ "John is a bachelor" is inconsistent with "John is male." The analytic statements are justified by the rules of language, by our practice. These same rules justify drawing conclusions and constructing arguments. Or rather, our drawing of conclusions and constructing of arguments in this way is the practice, or one of the practices, that the rules codify and the analytic statements exemplify.

So I am agreed with Edgeley that there is a very close connection between propositions of the kind in List A and those of the kind in List B, whether they are empirically or analytically true. I don't propose to defend at length the claim that the connection is a logically necessary one. One reason for saying that it is is that understanding the appraisals in List B is an essential part of understanding the relevant propositions. And that seems to be the view that Edgeley adopts.

Much of this account is perfectly right, and it explains and elaborates what I have claimed about thinking. But I disagree with Edgeley's claim that "believes" is a "descriptive psychological verb," and I think that this can be shown on Edgeley's own terms. It certainly does not follow from what he says about the notion of a "reason-for..."

The first stage is to elaborate and justify my claim that the items in List B are parasitic on the items in List A. There are two kinds of argument here; one turns on the "transparency" of belief. If the question "Is it the case that p?" is the dominant question out of its group of four, then surely the analogous questions and their answers in list A are dominant over the answers and questions in List B. Thus "Does 'p' imply 'q'?" is dominant over "Is the

argument from 'p' to 'q' valid?" First, the items on list A give grounds, reasons or backing for the appraisals in List B. Second, if I am to follow the rules and apply them in my own thinking, the form that I must have to follow them must be the form in List A. Suppose 'p' implies 'q'. Then 'p' justifies my believing that q. What am I to do in order to conform to this rule? Suppose that I know that p and that 'p' implies 'q'. Surely I can conclude that q from just these two items. I do not infer that the fact that p justifies the belief that q and then conclude that q. That step is unnecessary.

To put the point in Edgeley's terms. If the rules that guide thinking justify beliefs, (mental states,) then it is difficult to see how they could guide my thinking, since the relevant mental states are 'transparent' to me. So the form that refers to beliefs must be parasitic on the form that does not refer to them; that is, List A forms are dominant over List B forms.

But the radical objection is that if we follow through the idea that belief is a descriptive psychological term, the network described by Edgeley will not work. We need to find other ways of fulfilling the roles that Edgeley assigns to belief.

First, "believing that p" must - sometimes at least - be allowed to occupy the first place in the relation of "being a reason for..." Edgeley claims that the relation holds between 'facts' on the one hand and beliefs etc. on the other. But also one belief may be said to be a reason for another. But this generates paradoxes which cannot be resolved if we suppose that "believes" is a descriptive psychological verb.

First, consider <u>sorites</u> arguments. An argument of this form would be "If 'p' implies 'q', and 'q' implies

'r', then 'p' implies 'r'." That version could occur in Edgeley's List A. But I do not see how it could be properly translated into a form appropriate for List B. We can translate "'p' implies 'q'," "'q' implies 'r'," and "'p' implies 'r'"; but we cannot translate the whole argument-form. We can say "p is a good reason for thinking that q": and "q is a good reason for thinking that r." But, in order to justify saying that "p is a good reason for thinking that r" we need some connection between "thinking that q" and 'q'. Edgeley says that these two items are items in different categories. It is not easy to deny that. They are distinct. Given that 'p' is a good reason for thinking that q, we are justified in believing that q, and so forth. But given what we have so far, we do not have what would justify us in believing that r; we do not have the item that is a good reason for thinking that r; we do not have 'q', or the fact that q.

The difficulty is resolved very simply and naturally if we allow that "thinking that q" is also a good reason for thinking that r, and that this follows from "the fact that q is a good reason for thinking that r."

The point may be clearer if I put it in this way.

Say that 'p' = the fact that p,
'q' = the fact that q,
'r' = the fact that r.
and 'P' = thinking that p,
'Q' = thinking that q,
'R' = thinking that r.

From the argument form as given, we can derive "p is a good reason for Q" and "q is a good reason for R". But we cannot derive "p is a good

reason for R", which we need in order to arrive at the conclusion. The reason why we cannot derive it is that we need to say "(p is a good reason for Q and q is a good reason for R) and that is a good reason for thinking that p is a good reason for R". But the difficulty is resolved if we can say that "Q is a good reason for R" follows from "q is a good reason for R."

This seems reasonable enough. Surely, if someone believes that p, believes that 'p' implies 'q' and believes that q, we would say that his believing that q was reasonable, whether or not p was true, and whether or not p implied q. We would say so simply on the grounds that p was a good reason for thinking that q. No separate justification is needed for the belief that p.

Indeed, Edgeley allows the derivation in these rules that I am arguing for. He says in 3.15, pg. 76:-

"If, indeed, the normative implication of A(1) is simply a permission or licence to infer, it may seem that contravention of any sort is impossible. But to the extent that A(1) implies A(4), B(1) implies B(6). Thus if A(1) is analytic, B(1) rules out, as inconsistent, thinking that p and at the same time thinking that not-q; and therefore, more strongly, inferring 'not-q' from 'p'. A condition of the implication from A(1) to B(1) is thus that these things should be logically possible: i.e. that "A thinks that p and at the same time thinks that not-q" and "A infers 'not-q' from 'p'" should not themselves be inconsistent statements.

"But a still further condition is necessary, a condition of the possibility not of contravening but of conforming to the principle B(1). For B(1) to license the inference from 'p' to 'q' it must be logically possible for such an inference to be made, and therefore for someone to believe that q because he believes that p. If 'q' is a logical consequence, in a somewhat different sense, of his thinking that p."

And he explains that the different sense is

related to the notion of "being committed to" as in "Thinking that p commits one to thinking that q."

One might now move to saying that the relation of "being a reason for..." does not hold between a fact on one side and a belief on the other, but between beliefs. But this runs foul of the two points. One is the point that I could not follow rules cast in this form, which is a consequence of the transparency of belief. And the other is that a belief is not in general a good reason, and is never a conclusive reason, for conclusions of the ordinary empirical or logical sort that we are considering here.

And why should it follow? If p is a conclusive reason for thinking that q, why should thinking that p be a reason at all for thinking that q? One could argue that it does not follow at all; since one may always be mistaken, the fact that one thinks that p can never be a conclusive reason for thinking that q.

We assume that p and the belief that p are conceptually distinct states, and that 'p' and 'he believes that p' are both descriptive, but descriptive of different things. We find a crucial conceptual connection between these items but have no way of explaining or justifying it.

But on my account there is no problem. On my account "believes" is simply a way of saying what is being treated as true by the believer, without committing the speaker to a view. It is this that allows the notion of a mistake, or a difference of opinion. So there is a close conceptual connection between 'p' and the belief that p, and it is simply the result of the logical role of "believes" in the language. But that role, and that connection is not compatible with "believes" being a descriptive psychological verb if we are to understand the phrase in a strong sense.

On my account "believes that ..." will be true or false whether it is first or third person. And in that sense "believes" is a descriptive verb. But since its role is to identify the status something has, it does not follow that it is descriptive in the stronger sense that it "designates" anything.

7. Belief and evaluation.

According to Edgeley, there is a more basic mode of appraising "what psychological concepts designate" than the one that I have been considering. It is by reference to 'the facts'. The belief that p is favourably appraised if p, and unfavourably appraised if not-p. Professor Mayo in "Belief and Constraint" argues for a different connection between belief and evaluation as true or false. In this section I shall consider both these doctrines.

I want to criticize the idea that there is a close connection between belief and evaluation though I shall not reject it entirely. But if belief is a distinct object of evaluation in its own right, then it will be tempting to conclude that it is a distinct state in its own right. I want to show that any apparent evaluation of beliefs is parasitic on evaluation of other things, though not parasitic in any simple way on assertions.

The claim that belief is essentially evaluative, or that its role in evaluations is a central part of the role of "believes" in our language may be compared to the similar claim for "wants" and "intends." If such a claim was made for "wants" and "intends", few people would feel that anything like enough had been said. And it might be objected that where we seem to be evaluating wants or intentions, we are really expressing an evaluation of something else, whether an action or a character trait. This line would be particularly tempting to someone who held a dispositional account of wants. Such a line would need to be properly defended; but it is parallel to my line of objection to the claim that "believes" is an evaluative word.

There are also differences between the two

cases, some of which emerge in the complications involved in talking about a favourable evaluation in the case of belief. It isn't clear that this is an appropriate phrase; or, if it is, its appropriateness is certainly not self-evident.

We may try to save AB* in two ways. There is an obscurity about "right" and "wrong" here. Edgeley tries to remove it by putting "correct" and "mistaken" after them in his statement of the principle. It may be right to follow the evidence of the argument. But that does not guarantee that the conclusions are correct, or true. So we should contrast "right" and "correct" here. It is right to believe that p if the evidence is in favour of it, and wrong if it is not. But it is only correct to believe that p if p is the case. I am not sure but that "correct" does not itself have the same ambiguity that Edgeley is trying to remove. But it is clear what he is trying to say.

But this is not really a way out. On this interpretation, AB means only that the belief that p is true if p is true. Nobody would want to contest that, but AB appears to have lost its evaluative force. The question "What is wrong with having incorrect beliefs?" seems little different from the question "What is wrong with believing inconsistent things?" So AB cannot do what Edgeley would like it to do.

We might try to save AB in another way. Where the evidence is in favour of p, but p is not the case, it must be true that there is or could be more evidence against p. If we interpret "evidence" in the widest possible sense, this will be logically true. Where someone was justified in believing that p, but p is not true, there must have been some reasons that would have shown that the belief was not really justified at all. It is only the whole of the

* AB is introduced on p.86 of "Reason in Theory and Practice." It explains and justifies the connection between List A and List B, and the evaluation of beliefs "If p, then it is (correct) right to believe that p, and wrong (mistaken) to think that not-p."

evidence that justifies the belief that p; a part of the evidence does not justify the belief at all. But the whole of the possible evidence is rarely or never available. This requirement is far too restrictive. Whether or not a belief is justified can only be decided in relation to the evidence that is reasonably available at the time.

The conclusion that beliefs are right or wrong, justified or otherwise, whether or not they are true, cannot be avoided. So evaluation of them is independent of the relevant truths. It seems to follow that their existence must also be independent of the relevant truths.

But this is too short a way with Edgeley's principle AB. No amount of evidence can guarantee the truth of a conclusion. This is clearly true when the evidence is empirically related to the conclusion. But it is also true in very many cases where the arguments are not empirical. For it is always, or at least very often, possible that we have made a mistake in constructing the proof or working out the answer. This may be what Edgeley has in mind when he distinguishes two ways of evaluating beliefs. One is in the light of the evidence and/or the arguments. But whatever the results of this evaluation, the belief may still be true or false. So there is another way of evaluating, in the light of the facts, to put it crudely. This may be the point of formulating AB.

If this is to work, "evidence" will have to be interpreted narrowly and contrasted with conclusive demonstration. Compare Austin's remarks on this in "Other Minds."

The real difficulty is that there are not two distinct ways of evaluating here. It is misleading to suggest that there must be a clearly distinct way of evaluating a conclusion

apart from assessing the evidence. The point is simply that it is nearly always conceivable that a given conclusion may need to be re-evaluated. The distinctions that Austin discusses are very different from this. Austin is discussing cases where it is misleading to speak of producing (more) evidence, and where the claim is justified by appeal to a skill or ability. Edgeley's way of putting it suggests that there is some conclusive way of deciding on truth or falsity. If there is, why do we bother with fallible evidence and deceptive arguments?

AB is not acceptable. But the connection between evidence, reasons and truth is central to them. The notions of evidence and of a reason for or against a conclusion have built in to them criteria of evaluation (of evidence and of reasons.) For example, if the evidence misleads us, so that we draw a false conclusion, it is bad evidence to the extent that the conclusions are false or unreliable. And by reference to this, we select what is to count as a reason and what it is to count as a reason for or against.

Thus, the air pressure's being low is evidence that it will rain. This is true in virtue of the causal relation between low pressure and rain. But there is no reason why this causal relation should be thought to have anything to do with any states of people. Again, it follows from "John is a bachelor" that he is a male (if it is true that he is a bachelor, of course.) And this is true in virtue of a rule of language. And we have no reason to mention mental states in describing this situation either.

Beliefs become necessary when we realise that evidence may not be 'all of a piece'. Different bits of evidence may point in different directions and sometimes all the available evidence may point in the wrong direction, as we discover after the

argument. Only now does it become necessary to have some way of allowing us to say what the evidence is evidence for without thereby committing us to the claim that what it is evidence for is the case. In short, here again we find precisely the same pressure that I identified in thecase of executive actions. We need a way of identifying p's and q's without committing ourselves to them.

"Believes" is one such way. But there are many others. One special complication of the notion of belief is this. Unlike the notion of a "proposition" (and others), "believes" (and others) refer to a person. "Proposition" and its family are impersonal; "believes" and its family are not. But we can show clearly in this context a rationale for having these two different kinds of word in the language. Not only do we need a way of identifying p's and q's without committing ourselves to them. We also need a way of describing how someone is using them without ourselves using them. We can cater for failures of the evidence with the words "proposition", "conclusion" etc. The pressure's being low is evidence for the proposition that it will rain. But we cannot cater for people's errors and misjudgements in this way. Fred may conclude that it will rain because of the ache in his joints - which past experience has shown to be unreliable. John may argue correctly that high winds mean rain, and predict rain on these grounds; but the wind is not high. We cannot describe these situations without using "believes."

The criticisms of AB do not undermine my account of belief, and do not show that it was wrong to claim a close connection between List A and List B. In fact, my account enables us to make sense of the facts.

There is one trap that Edgeley does not fall into. A.P. Griffiths did, in his article "On Belief." (Proceedings

of the Aristotelian Society 1962/63.) If belief is to play a role in evaluation, in norms, rules etc., then it is empty to identify it simply as "that which is appropriate to truth". Griffiths allows that "to say this is not to say what belief is." But it is, he says, to say how belief can be a "possible concept of the public language." And, as Mayo asks in his reply "Belief and Constraint" (Sec. IV): "Does not the very meaning of 'rule,' 'criterion' etc., evaporate if there is no way of identifying states of affairs which are to count as satisfying or not satisfying the rule?"

But the only additional specification that Edgeley gives - and it is difficult to see what else he could have said - is in the reference to "abilities and tendencies to express belief" (pg. 92).

There are difficulties in the idea that abilities and tendencies etc. can be evaluated at all. Where we evaluate an ability or tendency to do X, this always comes to an evaluation of X-ing. "He has an unfortunate tendency to get drunk," surely means that his getting drunk is unfortunate. As long as his getting drunk remains a tendency and not an actuality there is nothing to complain about. It is only when this tendency manifests itself that there is anything to regret. "His ability to juggle three clubs is amazing" surely praises what he does, not his ability. At the least, any evaluation of an ability or a tendency to do X seems to depend on and follow from that evaluation of X-ing. Could one approve of someone's X-ing but disapprove of his ability to X?

There are cases that seem to be counter-examples. But on closer inspection they turn out not to be. It may be all right to do something once or a few times, but all wrong to do it often. And this leads to some of the awkward cases. I may

disapprove of a racing driver's tendency to lose time on the bends, where I would not mind if he only did it occasionally. But here it is the fact that he X-es often that makes the difference. I don't mind if he only does it occasionally, but only because it doesn't matter. If it did matter, I would mind that too. So it isn't the tendency to X as distinct from X-ing that I approve or disapprove. It is the frequency. Sometimes we might say critically "He tends to jab at the notes when he is playing the piano." It may not be that he does it always or even often. We speak of his tendency to jab, as opposed to his jabbing, just because he doesn't always do it. But it is the jabbing that we are criticizing. A case that is different again is this one. I can approve of someone's snooker playing, but disapprove of his ability to play snooker, as being a sign of mis-spent youth. This may be the case where two different criteria are being applied. My approval may be a recognition that he is very skilful at playing snooker. My disapproval may be based on the view that playing snooker is a waste of time, leads to bad company etc. Sometimes the case may turn on my ideas about how much and when one should play snooker. I may approve of it on this Saturday afternoon, but disapprove of it all of Monday to Friday.

In some cases, we use "tendency" "inclination" etc. slightly differently. In this use, the tendency or inclination may be suppressed. I may have a tendency to X, or an inclination to Y, which is never manifested. The judge may tend towards severity, but not show it in many cases; but one may come up in which he does. If he does I may approve, even though I disapprove of the tendency to be severe. But here, I am approving severity in the particular, and disapproving of it in general.

So any evaluation of belief comes to

evaluation of certain behaviour, especially certain assertions, called "expressions" of the belief. Since most of the actions that show a particular belief cannot be evaluated as true or false at all, this comes to saying that it is evaluation of assertions. But then it is not belief, as a distinct state, that is being evaluated, but assertions.

It might be argued that belief cannot occur in normative statements anyway, since that has the immediate consequence that belief is voluntary. And that claim is at least questionable. Mayo raises this objection against Griffiths in Section III of his article; but in Section IV he seems to allow that there are norms governing belief. Even if we deny that belief is voluntary, it may still be possible to evaluate it, to have norms and standards that apply to it. First there are norms, standards and evaluations of all sorts of things that are not under our control; apples, pictures, etc. And second it is permissible to evaluate someone's character and personality, even though it is not under his control in any simple way.

One difficulty with the idea that beliefs are essentially objects of certain kinds of evaluation stems from the transparency of belief. It should be obvious that when I consider whether p, or decide that p, it is not my beliefs that I evaluate, but 'p', or the proposition that p. Even where I do evaluate someone else's beliefs, I do so simply by considering whether p, or more leniently, whether 'p' is plausible, reasonable or likely; if I am to be more lenient still, I may consider these questions "given the believer's situation" or "given what he knew." Just as I answer questions about whether I believe that p by considering whether p, so I answer questions about whether other people's beliefs are correct by considering whether p. The belief that p is not an object to be evaluated in these cases, at least.

Mayo considers in the final section of his paper the question why I cannot mistrust, or, consequently, trust, my own beliefs. His answer to the question is this:-

"Wittgenstein's answer is the by now familiar one: that belief is a disposition which is shown by a person's behaviour, including under the latter both the simple assertion of the fact believed, and the expression 'I believe.' My way of looking at the matter, however, is from the point of view of the word 'good' which occurred in the photograph analogy. The reason why I cannot trust or mistrust my own beliefs is that having a belief is not having something which favourably disposes me towards something else - the fact believed - but rather, to have a belief is to be favourably disposed towards something else; to asserting (or accepting) the proposition believed." (Sec. VII)

At first sight this does not fit with the role that Edgeley assigns to belief. On his account, a belief is not a favourable disposition towards something, but is something towards which one may or may not be favourably disposed. But the quarrel between them does not really lie here. For the two are concentrating on different uses of "believes". Mayo is concerned with first-person uses and Edgeley seems to be mainly concerned with second and third person uses of "believes." We would expect a speaker to be favourably disposed towards assertions that p is the case (in some sense of 'favourably') if he says "I believe that p." And we do not know what attitude the speaker is going to have towards assertions that p is the case if he says "A believes that p." This difference can easily be explained by reference to the transparency of belief.

But the point remains that Edgeley seems to have forgotten that "believes" involves two people in the second and third person. And although the attitude of the speaker may be uncommitted, the attitude of the believer is not. The believer has evaluated what the speaker has not evaluated, or the believer is committing himself

where the speaker is not. It is surely odd to choose beliefs as the objects of the appropriate evaluation. It would be more natural to say that "he believes" and "you believe" gave the results of an evaluation, though not the speaker's evaluation.

On both accounts assertions are the object of the relevant evaluation. But this is not really satisfactory. Certainly assertions can be said to be true or false. But, as Edgeley points out, there are many other candidates, such as propositions, conclusions, theories, premisses, suggestions and so forth. And if we remember also the related evaluations expressed by "reasonable," "sound," "valid," we can include things like arguments, suggestions, assumptions, analyses and so on. One important difference between assertions and some of these other things is that the latter can occupy the last place in the crucial relation "being a reason for..." If p is a reason for concluding that q, it is not straightforwardly a reason for asserting that q. The fact that something is true, or that there is evidence for it is not, by itself, a reason for asserting it - even if there are no reasons why it should not be asserted. Other considerations need to be brought into play to justify <u>asserting</u> it, as distinct from accepting it.

This claim is not really orthodox. A more orthodox position would go something like this. If 'p' implies 'q', or is evidence for q, then p is a reason for asserting that q; it may not be a conclusive reason, but at its weakest it is a reason for asserting q unless there are considerations that outweight 'p'.

This view is criticized in the next chapter. But if we consider the possible answers to the question "Why did you say it was raining?", this orthodox claim seems less than plausible.

"I though you would like to know," "to

frighten you," "I saw you leaving without your raincoat," "I've been hoping for some rain for the garden," "I was afraid it would rain today and spoil our picnic," and so further, are all straightforwardly answers. But "because it was raining," doesn't really answer the question, or if it does, gives only an empty answer. It might be appropriate if the question was "why did you say that it was raining rather than sleeting, or sunny?" And even that question is most naturally taken as a question about whether it is rain or sleet that is falling, or whether it is really raining at all, rather than about what anybody says. The question "Why did you say it was raining?" might be answered by giving the evidence that it is raining - the noise on the roof, the drops of water on the window. But this interprets the question as "How did you decide that it was raining?" or "Why do you believe that it is raining?"

It is tempting to say at this stage that although it is not quite clear what the connection is, there is a close connection between the notions of belief and of favourable evaluation. We need to look a little more closely to see where this temptation comes from and what we are to make of it.

"Evaluation" needs to be used with caution. It is true that we talk of evaluating ideas, suggestions, objections, theories, analyses, arguments and so forth. But it is not the case that for every p that I believe, there was at some time a distinct process of evaluation. Deciding whether p may involve the weighing or evaluating of pro's, cons, arguments evidence. Equally it may not. In fact, it is something of a distortion to insist that deciding whether p necessarily involves <u>evaluating</u> anything.

Ryle's argument in connection with the traditional theory is particularly relevant here. He complains that

the traditional approach assimilates constructing a theory to expounding it. (See pp 273, 281 of "Concept of Mind" amongst other places.) Assigning a central role to evaluating beliefs here neglects the role of "believes" in stating the conclusions that are reached by le Penseur. Evaluating a belief is like checking a multiplication sum; as Ryle points out, the sum must be done before it can be checked. Doing the sum and checking it may involve some of the same operations; but the two activities are distinct. Deciding whether p is not the same as evaluating the belief that p, even though some of the same operations may be involved. Giving central place to the evaluation seems almost perverse.

We come to the word "favourable." If our attitude towards correct or true assertions is a favourable one, it is only one of a variety of favourable attitudes. Assertions, and indeed facts too, can be assessed on many different scales; they can be evaluated in many different ways. Evaluation as true or false is special, however; for it is only if I evaluate an assertion as being true that I can be said to have any attitude or disposition towards what it asserts, as distinct from the assertion itself. It may be right, or all right, to assert that p even if p is not the case. So this evaluation is particularly fundamental. And it is fundamental in such a way that one might conclude that "favourable" is not the right word.

There is some justification for using it, however. The activities that we are concerned with are activities like arguing, proving, discovering, examining, questioning and so forth. The criterion of success in these activities is conceptually linked to the notion of truth. (I defended this summary earlier.) Asserting what is the case is in general a success in this context;

and asserting what is not the case is usually a failure. We might say that someone who believes what is the case has succeeded, or at least not failed in the relevant activities. Certainly someone who believes what is not the case has failed somewhere - even if he could not be blamed for his failure. This link between the criterion of success of the relevant activities and the notion of truth justifies and explains using the word "favourable" and the link with evaluation. We can and do evaluate beliefs, conclusions, suggestions, etc., if this means that we decide whether they are true or false. But it is a mistake to give too much importance to the fact.

None of this means that beliefs are objects or states. Indeed, views of this kind cannot make sense of some of the complexities, in particular the complexities of the first-person use of "believes". But my own account fits them quite naturally. "Believes" identifies those things that the believer has decided are true. But it does not commit the speaker to a view - except, of course in the limiting case of the first person.

8. Belief and assertion

In this chapter I shall consider the relations between belief, truth and assertion. I shall criticize what Edgeley and Mayo say about this. Both of them get the relation wrong, though in different ways. Edgeley, not surprisingly, gives an account of the relation that requires the doctrine that "believes" is a psychological descriptive verb, and "designates" something. Mayo's account is much more complicated, and it is not obvious just where he has gone wrong. But he does allow an independence to the concept of belief which assigns it a far less fundamental role than the one it actually plays. Belief, assertion and truth are inextricably and fundamentally intertwined.

Edgeley's account of this matter is part of his overall position and is linked to his main doctrines. He explains it on p. 71 of "Reason in Theory and Practice."

"We could say that it is part of the meaning or force of the propositional form of words, i.e. any form of words that within the convention of the language expresses something that is true or false (or, allowing for vagueness, more or less true or false), that its basic use is to express or state the user's belief, conviction or opinion, more or less assured: thus understanding the meaning of, e.g. the words 'It is raining' involves knowing that these words alone, without the addition of the word 'believe' or any of its synonyms or near-synonyms can be properly used to state, express or communicate one's belief that it is raining. This connection between the propositional form of words and belief is, of course, a fairly weak one ...."

"It is raining" may properly be used to express one's belief that it is raining. But it is also proper to use it to state that it is raining. The difficulty with Edgeley's account here is just that the latter use must be the more fundamental. I can learn the latter proper use. But how am I to learn the former use, if belief is a state

conceptually distinct from its object? Surely Mayo has the right of it when he says that the rules of language refer to "standard speech-situations" and "have nothing to do ..... with belief." The basic use of "It is raining" is to state or assert that it is raining, not to express or state the speaker's belief that it is raining. The sentence is only correctly used if what it is used to state is true. It is not the speaker's beliefs that determine whether or not the words were used correctly, or whether the propositional speech-act was correctly performed.

Edgeley may reply that he does make the necessary connection between assertion and truth, via the concept of belief. And he may object to me that an act of assertion is correctly performed if it is believed, even though what is asserted is not true.

My objection is that the indirect connection that Edgeley makes is not adequate to its job.

The ambiguity of "correct" creates complications again. By one standard it is true that an act of assertion is correctly performed if it is true, so long as it is believed. By another standard, even a lie, that is neither true nor believed, may be an act of assertion correctly performed. My claim that it is correctly performed if it is true, whether or not it is believed, is correct(!) by yet another of the standards that we judge assertions by. And this last standard is fundamental to the notion of assertion.

Often, when we speak of a correct use of words or forms of speech, we mean "grammatically correct." So it is quite possible for me to say "the kitten is under the mat" and to have used the words correctly even though the kitten is not under the mat but in the cupboard. It would then be odd to say that I have used the words incorrectly, or that I do not understand the form of speech. Surely whatever I got wrong, it was not the English language. But grammatical correctness and truth are

not all that far apart. For example, if I use the words with unconventional references or employ non-standard classifications, in one sense what I say will be false, and false because I used the words incorrectly. Suppose I use the word "kitten" to identify what most speakers of English would call a "carpet." Or I might use the word "blue" to include "turquoise."

Nevertheless, when someone says something wrong, we say that he has used the words incorrectly only when he has made certain kinds of mistake, and not when he has made other kinds. We do not say that he has used the words incorrectly when his mistake is a mistake about truth, falsity and evidence. There is a distinction to be marked.

Nevertheless, someone who utters the words "I baptize thee ..." but not in the proper circumstances (infelicitously, as Austin would put it) has misused the words, even though he has not infringed any narrowly grammatical rules. In the same way, someone who does not recognize that questions of truth and falsity are in general legitimate when he utters something in the "propositional form of words" has misunderstood that form. This is the basic point about "the propositional form of words." Belief, we might say, comes later.

If Edgeley is wrong in this Mayo's account is much more promising. The relation is explained in two ways. First, there are rules about assertions, connecting assertions and truth. And it is via these rules that the concept of belief is to be introduced. Second,

"Truth is a norm-backed concept explicable <u>via</u> a non-normative concept <u>belief</u> which is already applicable independently of the norm."

"Both belief and truth are conceptually - and normatively - tied to asserting."

In Section V, he explains:-

"An assertion is a speech-act performed in a standard speech-situation, where the 'standard' situation is not defined in terms of the absence of non-standard-making features.

"Such standard situations are governed by rules; the speech-acts that are assertions carry information in so far as the rules are observed, misinformation in so far as they are broken; but they convey information, and misinformation, only in so far as the rules are presumed (by the listeners) not to have been broken: without this presumption, neither information nor misinformation is possible. But it is very important to be clear that these rules of truth-telling, so to speak, have nothing to do with moral rules about sincerity and lying, and nothing to do, as yet, with belief. They are rules which prescribe what we should say - or rather, forbid what we should not say, on pain of saying what is false. But for those for whom this is not a pain, there are other rules which prescribe truth-telling - or, rather, again, (since the fact that some proposition is true is never, by itself, sufficient reason for saying that anyone ought to assert it) rules which forbid saying what is false (since the fact that some proposition is false is, by itself, a sufficient reason for saying that no one ought to assert it). This second class of rules is, of course, the class of moral rules concerned with sincerity and deception. And the 'pain' in question - that on pain of which we are forbidden to say whatever is false - is, of course, the pain of doing what is morally wrong."

"We can now introduce the concept of belief. A person who disbelieves what he says, or believes something inconsistent with what he says, is a person who is consciously doing something wrong, to wit, deceiving. This divergence from the moral norm is insincerity, as distinct from the divergence from the rules of the indicative language-game, which was falsity. Sincerity is a non-divergence from the norm; as with truth, it is the negative word that, in Austin's phrase, 'wears the trousers'."

Edgeley's claim is that the basic use of the propositional form of words is to "state, express or communicate" one's beliefs. Truth is connected to belief by means of his principle AB. Mayo, on the other hand, sees the connection between a form of words and a standard speech-situation as basic and introduces belief in a way that makes it parasitic on this basic connection. Or does he? The "non-normative concept belief"is applicable independently of the "norm-backed concept truth;" and truth is to be explained via belief. So belief appears

to be the basic concept here. But both belief and truth are linked to the concept of assertion. And yet Mayo's account of asserting seems to make truth the basic concept.

I suspect that the vagueness of the crucial terms creates a good deal of confusion here; terms like 'basic', 'norm-backed,' 'explain via' are not immediately clear. A lot of guess-work is needed in clarifying them.

The conclusions that truth is a norm-backed concept, that it is to be explained via belief and that belief can be applied independently of the norm emerge from Mayo's discussion of Griffiths' account of belief. "Believes" must be applicable independently of "true;" or at least it cannot be defined simply as that which is appropriate to truth. (Equally, truth cannot be defined simply as that which is appropriate to belief - even with the circular but saving words "if it is correct.") But that is consistent with Mayo's introduction of belief. For that introduction to work it is clearly necessary that we be able to decide that someone disbelieves - or believes - what he is asserting, independently of the question whether it is true. But that only raises the question how it is to be applied; and Mayo's answer is to turn to what a man says and does - though he explicitly allows that these need not be logically sufficient criteria. And Mayo and Edgeley would agree on that - with a proviso about the first person.

It would not be fair to take it that Mayo is offering two accounts of belief. He is answering two rather different questions. One is the question how "believes" is to be applied. And it seems to me that what he calls the "introduction" of belief is not an introduction by means of criteria of application, but by means of the point or role of the concept in the language. "Believes" is applied independently of "true". But the point or role of "believes" is parasitic on the notion of truth.

But I am not sure what I am to understand by the claim that truth is a 'norm-backed' concept. How does a 'norm-backed' concept differ, if at all, from a 'normative' concept? How are we to classify concepts as normative or not? Is "wife" a normative or a non-normative concept? Or is it just norm-backed? These are not mere niggling questions to be pushed aside. The lack of clarity about this affects directly how we see the relation between the concept of truth and the relevant norms.

There are two related norms that are involved here. One is the rule about truth-telling. This rule fits what Mayo says in that it ties the concepts of belief, truth and assertion together. Mayo recognizes that there is some difficulty about it, but accepts too much. Suppressio veri and suggestio falsi can both be justified. If the Chancellor tells the truth about the Government's intentions he will cause a panic. Suppressio veri is justified. But if rumour and speculation are already rife, even that may not be enough. So he must lie. Suggestio falsi is justified. And this is no more a trivial qualification than the one that Mayo accepts, that the fact that something is true is not enough to justify asserting it.

Asserting something is an act. There are all sorts of considerations that bear on the question whether I should say that p. Some bear on the question whether I should say it or keep silence or write it; some bear on the question whether I should say p or q or r. The truth or falsity of the proposition that p is only one of these considerations. Assertions are special. They can be assessed as true or false, and justified by appeal to a special kind of reason. But these special features do not exempt acts of assertion from being assessed in the other ways that we assess actions.

Nonetheless Mayo is right in saying that we must

assume that people are telling the truth, or at least trying to. The obligation to tell the truth is not an absolute one. It is difficult to formulate the rule properly, but we must accept that there is such a rule.

The other norms are derived from evidence and proof. We can say sometimes that "the evidence justifies asserting, claiming, suggesting that p." There is an obvious connection with any rule of truth-telling. We can treat any consideration that bears on the truth or falsity of p as one relevant justification of assertions that p. In the limiting case, we can say that the fact that there is a cow in the kitchen (a standard situation) justifies performing a speech-act of asserting that there is a cow in the kitchen. That this is the kind of thing that Mayo has in mind is shown when he remarks in Sect. VI. "Now for obvious reasons we do not adopt principles of truth-telling (as distinct from the Principle of Truth Telling;) we could, but do not, formulate principles such as 'whenever there is a horse in the garden, I shall say that there is a horse in the garden'."

We do not formulate them because we would need an impossibly large number of such rules, and because they are pretty well vacuous. At least, I suppose that these are reasons that Mayo has in mind. But Mayo does believe that we could formulate them.

My reservation about all this will be obvious. A position of this kind commits us to the view that it is assertions that reasons and evidence bear on. It should be clear why I believe that this is too narrow and misleading.

But the fundamental objection to Mayo's position is to his introducing the notion of belief separately from truth. Belief is more fundamentally involved here than Mayo recognizes. There are three difficulties about Mayo's view. Two bear on the distinction between the first and second level of rules of truth-telling. The other bears on the notion of a rule itself.

First, there is the distinction between the two levels at which the rule of truth-telling applies. They are not separate, as Mayo believes. At the first level the rules of truth-telling "have nothing to do with moral rules about sincerity and lying..." Certainly, the constitutive rules about assertions must be stated without reference to the moral rules. The moral rules are rules regulating the practice of asserting and therefore presuppose the rules that describe the practice, the constitutive rules. But Mayo's first-level rule of truth-telling looks like a regulative rule. The rationale is not just that the concept of telling the truth, or saying what is false (i.e., the concept of telling) requires this rule. Language is meaningful without the rule; but without the rule it fails to convey information, i.e. is useless without the rule. The constitutive rules of language are the rules governing the "standard situations" and so defining what assertions are. But then it is difficult to see what difference there is supposed to be between first and second level rules of truth-telling, apart from the two different sanctions.

But if the rule of truth-telling is fundamental to the possibility of communicating information (or misinformation) by means of language, then we have a rationale for the moral rules about sincerity and lying; or rather, we have a rationale for a specific sanction against those who take advantage of the assumptions that we have to make about this. But if the rules, at the two levels, are to be seen as really separate, then the moral rules will lack a rationale, and the identity of the rules - in that they both enjoin or require the same behaviour - will be simply an odd coincidence.

Besides this, without "believes" and "disbelieves", the distinction that Mayo is trying to draw between the two levels cannot be stated. It isn't just the notion of sincerity, but that of insincerity as well, that depends on the notion of belief. Without the idea that one

may believe or disbelieve something, "insincere" collapses into "untrue", and "sincere" collapses into "true;" or "untrue" collapses into "insincere" and "true" into "sincere." And the distinction between making a false assertion by mistake and doing so deliberately disappears. The most we can say is that the speaker has got it wrong. For one of the points about "sincere" is precisely that one may get things wrong ("divergence from the norm") but still be sincere; (and, I suppose, one may get things right, and still have been insincere.)

Mayo is wrong in thinking that he can find some firm ground from which to introduce the concept of belief. Belief is more fundamentally involved here than he allows. For the notion of a rule (of language) depends on the notion of belief.

Wittgenstein in the "Philosophical Investigations" has made familiar the idea that unless a "rule" allows a possibility of an error it is not really a rule. What he meant to say was not connected in any simple way with the notion of belief. For his idea was, essentially, but a "rule" that allowed whatever I do to count as keeping the rule was not really a rule. It is this, surely, that he relies on in the discussion of the diary example a propos of the notion of a private language. Such a "rule" would be empty in that it would not entitle us to rule anything out as a failure to conform or rule anything in as success in conforming: and so it would have no force. But this does not suffice to distinguish rules from (mere) regularities. If I am in the habit of smoking a cigarette every hour, then there is something that would count as "breaking" or "violating" this 'rule'/habit.

The distinction lies in two points. The first is that in the case of a rule the question how the rule is to be interpreted or applied can always be raised. In the case of a regularity or habit, it cannot. This underlies the discussion of the rule "+n" in "Philosophical

Investigations". (Section 187. See also Sections 237, and 143 ff. Compare also Peter Winch's book "The idea of a social science"). Much attention has been given to this point. Less attention has been given to what is important here. Rules can be broken by mistake, or deliberately. Regularities can break down, but not either by mistake or deliberately. (If I do not smoke for three hours, and then smoke two cigarettes in one hour, I have not made a mistake.) But we cannot distinguish between mistakes and violations without the concept of belief. Without "believes" we can only say that X is doing something different this time, not that he has broken a rule or that he is doing the wrong thing.

To acknowledge this involvement is not to deny that the rules must be stated and explained without overt reference to belief, or that this way of stating them is primary. But grasping the point that such statements are rules, not regularities, involves grasping the notion of believing something. Compare here my earlier discussion of the difference between "Duck if you are being shot at" and "Duck if you believe you are being shot at" in chapter 5 of Part I.

Mayo continues after the passage I quoted earlier:-

"Now it is widely held that belief, at least in very many and most typical cases, is dispositional. If belief were a disposition to say, we could evade the difficulties in the thesis that 'belief is what is appropriate to truth' thus. Either at the level of the rules of the language game, or at the level of the moral rules, the belief-requirement is none other than the assertion-requirement, plus: exactly the same factor that has to be added to the action-requirement of a moral rule, to wit, the so-called motive-requirement. It is not enough, morally speaking, simply to do whatever is required: it must be done 'in the right spirit', 'for the right reason', the act must spring from a natural or second-nature tendency to do that kind of act in that kind of situation. If we call this 'willing', what I have just said is a way of putting Griffiths' dictum that 'willing is what is appropriate to what is right.' In the cases of assertion,

the extra factor is belief - or would be, if belief were a disposition to say. One is required, at the language-game level, not just to say what conforms to the rules on this or that occasion, but to make a practice of doing so - on pain of not playing that particular game. And one is required, at the moral level, to make a practice of playing that particular game at all times - on pain of being a liar.

"Belief is not, or at least not only, a disposition to say. But whatever else it is, it is only in so far as it is a disposition to say that it is normatively tied to truth, and for the simple reason that the truth is what we are required to tell and believe.."

Mayo is wrong in saying that belief is an additional requirement on assertion - over and above the rules linking situation to speech-act. But he is right that there is a requirement on assertions. He links the possibility of holding this view with the account of belief as a disposition to say. But he is wrong to do so. Surely if belief were a disposition to say, it would not be an additional requirement. For a disposition cannot be something additional to its manifestations. In any case, it isn't clear in what sense people ever say things that they are not disposed to say. True, they sometimes do not say things that they are disposed to say, for one reason or another. But that is not the same as saying things they are not disposed to say. A liar might be said to be disposed to say the truth - under some other circumstances. But he is also disposed to say what is false under the actual circumstances that he is in.

Nonetheless, there is a point here. It is essentially the one that Mayo is making. But Mayo's way of putting it is misleading. Consider the parallel with "willing." Mayo says that "the right is what we are required to do, and to be disposed to do." And this in the context of his claim that "willing" is, at least in part, a disposition. In the case of "willing," it was points of just this kind that were used to support the Dualist account.

He is right in the following sense. Generous acts that are performed not because of generosity or compassion but because of ambition or embarrassment (for example) are not really generous acts at all. But this does not really depend on the dispositions of the agent. It depends on his criteria of success, his reasons for acting as he does. Generosity that comes from ambition is 'generosity' with the wrong criterion of success, and for the wrong reason. And so not really generosity at all. Similarly, it isn't enough to say something true; it must be said for the right reason.

But what <u>is</u> the reason for saying something? Is a disposition to do something a reason for doing it? I have already argued this point in attacking the behaviourist account of belief. There are dispositions to act, of course, and sometimes these explain actions. But the kind of explanation that they provide is not that of a reason or criterion of success.

Surely the point about assertions is this. They must be made in conformity with the rules, and they must be made <u>because</u> they are in conformity with the rules governing assertions. That is, they must be made as being correct; that is the appropriate criterion of success. And <u>that</u> is the requirement. To say that belief is an additional requirement adds only that mistakes and errors are possible and to allow for them to be described. And that, of course, is the essence of my account of belief. Later, in the context of discussing the problem about belief and the will in the next chapter, I shall have something more to say about the notion of a "reason" as it is involved here.

9. Belief and the will

One of the traditional problems about belief is the question whether belief is subject to the will or not. Most philosophers have rejected the idea that it is. But it was defended by Descartes, William James, Newman and Schiller. I shall consider two recent articles that deal with this topic; one is the article that I have already discussed by Mayo "Belief and Constraint," and the other is a defence of Descartes by Anthony O'Hear in Philosophy of April 1972, called "Belief and the Will."

Mayo's position is at first sight rather odd. In Section III he takes it as a consequence of the normative theory that belief is voluntary, on the grounds that "ought" implies both "can" and its subcontrary "can omit." And he concludes that,

"... the question, whether we can choose to believe, is paralleled not by the question, whether we can choose to act, but by the question, whether we can choose to feel, intend, etc. Which is indeed the same question, the answer to which appears to be, No. We can exhort someone to act - which implies that he can choose to act or not to act - and we can perhaps also exhort him to act in a certain frame of mind, but we cannot mean to imply that it is up to him which frame of mind he chooses to do it in, which of a range of feelings he chooses to select as that of which his action shall be the outcome."

Yet in Section VI, he concludes,

"Though belief may properly be said to be required of us, it is a requirement which we ourselves cannot endorse - until after we have complied with it, if we do. In this respect belief is, after all, more comparable with a moral principle than with a character-trait."

But it is not clear that the two conclusions are really incompatible. Mayo himself recognizes that insofar as actions - in particular, saying, - are "components" of belief, they may be things we ought to do or ought not to do. "A disposition, like a character-

trait," he says, "may or may not be something that we ought or ought not to have." But "feelings of warmth or overwhelming conviction, on the other hand, seem not to be the sort of thing we can be exhorted or forbidden to have." He is inconsistent in attacking Griffiths' account on the grounds that as a normative theory it must have the consequence that belief is voluntary. If this consequence is rejected, then the two conclusions are not incompatible.

It is not clear that the normative account must have the consequence that our beliefs are under our control. Even if our character-traits and frames of mind are under our control in some sense, they are not straight-forwardly voluntary. And yet one can make character-traits and motives the subjects of moral judgements.

And perhaps some kind of "compatibilist" position must be right. For if we accept Mayo's argument in Section III, and reject the claim that belief is voluntary on his grounds, it follows that there cannot be norms governing our beliefs. But the laws of evidence and canons of criticism are clearly not descriptive of our thinking, since we all think wrongly at least sometimes. So how do they bear on our thought? How can we admit any kind of responsibility for our beliefs? So that won't do. And yet accepting any simple voluntarist position seems absurd. Believing something or assenting to it are not under my control as are actions like raising my arm. The Queen of Hearts was being absurd when she said that she could believe six impossible things before breakfast, and suggested that Alice should practice.

But a compatibilist position must come to terms with the principle that "ought" implies "can," etc. And such a position needs quite a lot more explanation; as yet it would be too

vague to be at all satisfactory. We need at least an explanation of the way in which the norms and canons of reason bear on belief.

It is easy to say that believing something is not an action, and so neither voluntary nor involuntary. And this is supported by the fact that we cannot be forced to believe. At least we cannot be forced to believe in the ways that we can be forced to raise an arm. If we say that reasons or evidence force or compel us to believe, this must be metaphorical. Nor is believing something outside (or inside) my control in the way that falling downstairs is. Falling downstairs is an accident that I can avoid if I am careful.

But we cannot leave it at that. First, the traditional defence of voluntarism can fasten on the idea that assenting to something is an action, or seems very like one; and even if we reject the notion of assent, there are other actions closely related to belief that are clearly voluntary - such as saying. Second, we have still to explain where our responsibilities fit it, and how norms can be relevant here.

A tempting resolution emerges from O'Hear's discussion. In Part II of his article he says:

"Descartes does not say that we are free to believe what we see as false. What he does say is that we will (i.e. are responsible for) the explicit acts of assent that we make. We are responsible for them because we accept the reasons on which the beliefs are based. We may, if they are adequate and convincing, have no choice but to accept them and to assent. This Descartes does not deny; as we have seen, he thinks this is the height of freedom."

And then in Part III, he says:

"The conclusion from this examination of Descartes' views on error and the place of the will in judgements is that when I explicitly advert to a belief, in making my decision on that belief, I use certain criteria and methods, the responsibility for which I must be prepared to take."

But this does not really help. It is far from clear that we can be said to choose the criteria and methods that we work by. The difficulties that created the original problem recur in this solution.

Consider a simple and standard case, that of calculation, and of addition in particular. What is 351 + 217? In a sense, I can use any method I like to arrive at an answer. But walking twice round the quadrangle would be senseless; that would not generate a number, and so not even a candidate answer. If I did that, either I would not be trying to arrive at an answer, or I would be irrational. I can guess, count tea leaves, stick pins in a table of numbers, or subtract and multiply the result by another number, chosen by some criterion. I might produce the right result. But the right result is defined as the result obtained by correctly applying a certain procedure. No other procedure gives the right results consistently. So there is good reason for using that method. It could even be argued that any other procedure is not really addition; or that it is not really a <u>method</u> for arriving at the <u>answer</u> at all.

Certainly, I can choose my procedure in a way which I cannot choose my beliefs. I can go through the motions of counting my tea leaves or write down 351 - 217 = 134 x 6 (the number of digits in the original question) = 804. And I can do this perversely, knowing that the correct method is 351 + 217 = 568. I can do it because applying the procedure is a series of actions which I can choose to perform. But exercising that choice involves abandoning the criterion of success implicit in the question - unless, perhaps, I apply the procedure as an experiment. It involves giving up just trying to get it right. And then I am no longer calculating - even if I am writing down numbers in accordance with rules.

In many cases where we are explicitly trying to come to a conclusion, there is no clear-cut method. Even where there is, (as perhaps in questions about mechanics) applying the procedure does not guarantee the correctness of the results in the same way as it does in mathematical calculation. But nonetheless, there are rules of evidence, and canons of criticism, which it is in my power to ignore, even if the price is that I am no longer 'playing the same game' as everyone else.

But these are not just games that we play. We cannot treat calculating, or thinking out a problem, as if it were chess or football. To adapt an argument of Mayo's, anyone who rejects rational criteria and methods for arriving at answers is, ex hypothesi, not being rational. But, to the extent that he is not rational, he is not in control of himself, and so cannot be said to be choosing. Besides, what could the criterion be that I use when I choose my criteria and methods? If the choice is to be rational, there must be one. Indeed, if the choice is to be rational, the criterion could only be that the criteria and methods that I use are those that are most likely to lead to the right answer. And if the choice is not to be rational, then can we ~~can~~ say that there is choice here? And finally, even if the notion of choice makes some kind of sense, it is surely clear that we do not choose the criteria and methods that we use as we choose our clothes, or our pastimes.

But these questions and problems are essentially the same as the questions and problems about rational assent. O'Hear has simply moved them back a stage. But moving them back a stage generates an infinite regress.

Incidentally, the issue of cognitive relativism has no bearing on this. Even if relativism is true, it does not seem to

follow either that individuals can choose and change their criteria and methods like their clothes and jobs, or that socieities can do so as they can choose and change the qualifications for citizenship or their trial procedures. Consider here Winch's article "Understanding a Primitive Society." Nothing there, surely, gives grounds for saying that the Azande can change their conceptual system if they want to, or even that they are responsible for it.

In Part III of his article, O'Hear does make a valuable and suggestive point.

"In fact, it is at the point of applying the rules for coming to cognitive decisions that we do have control over what we believe, and where the will may be said to be operative."

O'Hear does not distinguish between the two points. But this point is not the same as the one I have been discussing. Here, we have responsibility for the way in which we apply the rules, and that is compatible with not having any responsibility for the rules themselves. But precisely what he was saying in the earlier quotation was that we had responsibility for the rules.

We can quite naturally be held responsible for carrying out a calculation properly. People are blamed sometimes when they do not. We do not choose the rules and methods of calculation, but we can be held responsible for following them and executing them properly. Someone who has got a calculation wrong, or who believes what is false, may have been careless or negligent; and those are things for which we are blamed. If I carelessly knock over my coffee, I can be blamed for it. Knocking over my coffee was not exactly a voluntary action; I did not want to do it, or set myself to do it, or try to do it. And in one way it was not within my control, for if it had been, I would not have done it. But I could have avoided doing it if I had taken more care, and exercised the control over my limbs that I

am normally taken to have. In this sense it was within my control, and it was something "subject to my will."

But what we are held responsible for on this account is for executing certain procedures, or for being careful. If we have been careful and if we have executed the procedures properly, we cannot be blamed for the results. I cannot be held responsible for a number. Nor can I be held responsible for the fact that 568 is the right answer.

Sometimes the fact that someone holds a particular belief may show something about his character. My belief that, despite all appearances, Fred is up to no good, may be a reason for saying that I am suspicious and mistrustful character, even if there is evidence for my belief. And so I may be open to moral assessment. But then the assessment is of my character, not really of my belief.

So there are ways in which I can or might be blamed, held responsible, be open to moral assessment because I believe that p. This is not quite the same as saying that beliefs are open to moral assessment, but it is enough to explain our practices. It is tempting to argue that if p is true, the question of blame does not arise but that it does arise if p is false. Certainly, if I got the right answer that is evidence that I was not careless in getting it. And if Fred is up to no good, that is evidence that my suspicion and mistrust were not to be blamed. But in neither case is the evidence conclusive, so the principle is not a hard and fast one.

The question remains why blame and responsibility cannot directly get a foothold on belief. The first answer turns on the transparency of belief. If I have arrived at the total correctly, blaming me for believing that it is 568 is like blaming me for the fact that it is 568.

The second answer is more complicated, but more illuminating. It turns on the notion of a "reason for....." We can distinguish four uses of the notion of a reason.

(1) A reason as what explains or makes sense of something. Examples are explanations giving causes - "the reason for the thunder is...." - or some explanation in mathematics or logic - ("explanatory" use.)

(2) A reason for believing something. In this context the notions of evidence and argument are crucial. - ("evidence" use.)

(3) The reason why something is so can be given in terms of its function or purpose. The reason why a yacht has ballast is that the ballast keeps it steady in the water (etc.) - ("purpose" use.)

(4) A reason for doing something. - ("action" use.)

There are all sorts of relations between these uses. I have already tried to distinguish between the evidence and action uses. The explanatory use is related to the evidence use. There is an obvious similarity between the purpose and action uses. There is also a connection between the explanatory and purpose uses via the notion of explanation.

But it is the contrast between the evidence and action uses that is relevant to us here. There is one crucial difference. If p is a reason for doing something, it is so only on condition that the agent wants something (to put it roughly.) Its being dark is a reason for switching on the light only if the agent wants to see. If he wants not to be seen, its being dark is not a reason for switching on the light. But if 'p' is a reason for believing that q, then it is so independently of any wants or desires that the

subject may have. The flash of lightning is a reason for believing that it will thunder soon, and my wants and desires have nothing to do with it.

We might look for an explanation to the relation between the explanatory and evidence uses. Explanatory reasons generate and justify evidence uses of "reason." And explanatory reasons are clearly independent of my wishes.

One consequence of the difference between explanatory and evidence uses is this. If my reasons for believing something, or for accepting it, really are reasons for believing it or accepting it, they are reasons whatever I may want. But if my reasons for believing something are only reasons given that I want something, then they are not really reasons for <u>believing.</u> Now this can happen, and it seems to me that this is exactly what we call wishful thinking. The difference between wishful thinking and "proper" thinking is that I have reasons for thinking and accepting something which are not independent of what I want. This connection with what I want is what gives the notions of blame and responsibility a foothold.

Suppose that Fred believes that Pygmalion will win the 3.30. He may believe this because he has seen the horses run, because Pygmalion's form is better than the others' and so forth. If his reasons are of this kind, they are good reasons for his belief. What he wants has nothing to do with it. But if he believes it because he has put his shirt on it, then the reason for his belief is that he has put his shirt on it. That could only be a reason if he wanted to keep his shirt. If he wanted to lose it, that would be a reason for believing that Pygmalion would not win the 3.30.

This does not yet explain cases where I have been negligent. In these cases, my reasons may not have anything to do

with what I want. If I carelessly give 668 as the answer to 351 + 217, it does not follow that I want that answer, or that I am thinking wishfully. I may even wish that the answer was 568.

Part of the explanation is just that I have been negligent (in doing something) and so I can be blamed or held responsible in just the same way and for just the same reasons that I can be blamed or held responsible in other cases of negligence. But notice also that in these cases, I don't have any (good) reasons for believing what I do believe. At least my reasons are deficient, and avoidably deficient. So it does seem appropriate that I should be blamed.

My suggestion comes to this. The apparent paradox is that we seem to be held responsible for our beliefs, and yet we cannot be because they are not under our control. The solution lies in distinguishing what we can, and what we cannot, be held responsible for. A detective who follows the procedures for investigating a crime carefully, thoroughly and impartially cannot be blamed if he arrives at no answer or the wrong answer. But he can be blamed if he arrives at no answer or the wrong answer and his investigation was not carried out properly. Whether or not he does that is within his control. It may be brought about by something about his character, by his having some want on which the case bears or by negligence. Whatever the reason, his failure will mean that he believes that Fred is the man (or he is not) without (sufficient) reason. If he could have avoided that, we can blame him without conceptual absurdity.

There is a good deal more to be said on this issue. But this suggestion does offer a key to resolving the main paradox.

10. Intentionality

"Believes" raises problems for logicians that have been much discussed. Quine's wrestlings have been particularly important and stimulating. The problem about "believes" is a special case of the problem as it arises for all words that express "propositional attitudes" and, indeed for all model contexts. But the very general problems of model logic are beyond my scope here. Essentially, the problem is that propositional attitudes violate the principle, called "Leibniz' law", that the terms of a true statement of identity can be substituted for each other, salva veritate.

Much has been written about this well-known problem. It has ramifications in many other areas of philosophy, in particular in theories of reference, model logic, and philosophy of mind. There are various resolutions of it, notably from Meinong, Frege and Russell. I shall not attempt to survey these discussions; that would take me too far afield. Quine's resolution is, in effect, to restrict the application of Leibniz' law to "referentially transparent contexts."

In "referentially opaque contexts," such as the sentences containing "believes", Leibniz' law does not apply. A good criticism of this view is to be found in Linsky's book "Referring", chapter 7. The difficulties centre on giving a definition of referential opacity without falling into circularity or appeal to Leibniz' law itself.

Leibniz' law seems to offer a simple way of saying what identity is; and this underlies the view that logic must be extensional. But this problem appears to block that view and that way of saying what identity is. Brentano uses what is fundamentally the same feature of language as a criterion for distinguishing "the physical" from "the mental." See "Psychologie von Empirischen Standpunkt" Vol. I. Bk 2 cap 1. I shall

here discuss only the view that substitution of expressions that refer to the same object is not permissible in certain use of "believes".

In "Word and Object" p. 30, Quine distinguishes the two cases thus:-

"A construction that may be transparent or opaque is the belief construction, 'a believes that p.' Thus, suppose that though

(7) Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline,

he is ill-informed enough to think that the Cicero of the orations and the Tully of De Senectute were two. Faced with his unequivocal denial of "Tully denounced Catiline", we are perhaps prepared both to affirm (7) and to deny that Tom believes that Tully denounced Catiline. If so, the position of "Cicero" in the part "Cicero denounced Catiline", considered apart, is not purely referential. So "believes that" (so conceived) is opaque.

"At the same time there is an alternative way of construing belief that is referentially transparent. The difference is as follows. In the opaque sense of belief considered above, Tom's earnest "Tully never denounced Catiline" counts as showing that he does not believe that Tully denounced Catiline, even while he believes that Cicero did. In the transparent sense of belief, on the other hand, Tom's earnest "Cicero denounced Catiline" counts as showing that he does believe that Tully denounced Catiline, despite his own misguided verbal disclaimer.

"'Cicero' has purely referential occurrence in (7) or not according as 'believes' is taken transparently or not ..."

But the transparent sense is not unproblematic. Quine offers the following case (p. 148/149):-

".. Where 'p' represents a sentence, let us write 'dp' (following Kronecker) as short for the description:

the number x such that ((x = 1) and p) or ((x = 0 and not p).

We may suppose that poor Tom, whatever his limitations regarding Latin literature and local philanthropies, is enough of a logician to believe a sentence of the form 'dp = 1' when and only when he believes the sentence represented by 'p'. But then we can argue from the transparency of belief that he believes everything. For, by the hypotheses already before us,

(3) Tom believes that d(Cicero denounced Catiline) = 1.

But, whenever 'p' represents a true sentence,

dp = d(Cicero denounced Catiline).

But then by (3) and the transparency of belief,

Tom believes that dp = 1,

from which it follows, by the hypothesis about Tom's logical acumen, that

(4) Tom believes that p.

But 'p' represented any true sentence. Repeating the argument using the falsehood "Tully did not denounce Catiline" instead of the truth "Cicero denounced Catiline," we establish (4) also where 'p' represents any falsehood. Tom ends up believing everything."

And yet he also shows (p. 147/148) that there are occasions when we do need the transparent use of "believes." There is an important difference between:

(1) Tom believes that someone (is such that he) denounced Catiline,

and (2) Someone is such that Tom believes that he denounced Catiline.

Quine drives the point home with the following (p. 148):-

"Thus see what urgent information the sentence 'There is someone whom I believe to be a spy' imparts, in contrast to 'I believe that someone is a spy' (in the weak sense of 'I believe there are spies'".)

Quine identifies this as a "second intersecting ambiguity". The first is the problem about substituting definite singular terms.

Quine concludes on p. 149:-

"In general what is wanted is not a doctrine of transparency or opacity of belief, but a way of indicating, selectively and changeably, just what positions in the contained sentence are to shine through as referential on any particular occasion.

"A way of doing that is to agree to localize the failure of transparency regularly in the 'that' of 'believes that' and the 'to' of 'believes to', and not in the 'believes'. Thus we may continue to write 'Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline' when we are content to leave the occurrences of 'Cicero' and 'Catiline' non-referential, but write rather:

(5) Tom believes Cicero to have denounced Catiline

if we want to bring 'Cicero' into referential position."

I must confess that I do not see how this resolves the problem about Tom and dp = 1. For we can just as well write:

(3') Tom believes d(Cicero denounced Catiline) to equal 1.

Tom believes dp to equal 1.

(4') Tom believes p (or 'p').

Perhaps both "Tom believes the sun is shining" and "Tom believes 'The sun is shining'" are malformed. But "Tom believes the sentence 'The sun is shining'" is not obviously so.

There is a more serious and more fundamental difficulty. We really need some criterion other than failure of substitution for saying when positions are referentially opaque. The alternative is to define referential opacity in terms of the failure of substitution. These lines of objection are discussed in detail in L. Linsky "Referring" chapter VII.

If a particular term can be put in referential position then it is being used referentially. But just what are the considerations that guide us in sometimes allowing "Tom believes Cicero to have denounced Catiline" and sometimes insisting on "Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline."? We can guess at the contextual features that would be relevant. But they surely merit some discussion.

Such discussion might also reveal the answer to a more important question. Why does substitution sometimes fail? What is the need for this feature of our language?

There is a false premiss in the argument for this view. It is that substitution of expressions that refer to the same object salva veritate, is not possible in these contexts. It is not that substitution is not possible, but that it is subject to special rules and restrictions in these contexts, because we are playing a special language-game.

Eddy Zemach, in Analysis of 1969, resolves the problem in this way:-

"Consider, e.g., the statement:

(7) "Mrs. Jones believed that the defendant was a policeman" made by Mrs. Jones' attorney at a trial. Clearly 'the defendant' is here proper-used.* The attorney does not wish to imply that Mrs. Jones referred to the prowler, at the time she considered him to be a policeman, as 'the defendant.' Therefore, although Mrs. Jones may never have referred to, or could never have referred to, the defendant as 'the defendant,' we can use the term 'the defendant' in order to refer to the entity concerning which Mrs. Jones had various (say, false) beliefs. After the man is convicted, the lawyer might say that

(8) Mrs. Jones believed that the murderer was a policeman and (if 'the murderer' is again used in the lawyer's present language and not in the language of Mrs. Jones at the time she held this belief) this would not imply

(9) Mrs. Jones believed that a certain murderer was a policeman (9) would indeed follow from (8) if 'the murderer' in (8) were proper-used by Mrs. Jones, rather than by us or by her lawyer, to refer to the entity she had believed to be a policeman.

"Quine's distinction between referentially opaque and referentially transparent contexts may be replaced now by a simple principle permitting an unlimited substitution, salva veritate, of all co-referential terms, in all (including oblique) contexts. This principle, however, would not permit the free substitution of homonymous terms, and, according to the above analysis, 'the murderer' as used (if it were used at all) by Mrs. Jones in the past, and 'the murderer' as used by the attorney in the present, are nothing but homonyms; they are used to refer to different entities altogether. If in some Tibetan dialect Chairman Mao is referred to as 'Nixon', this term is only homonymous with our term 'Nixon' and hence is not co-referential with (and therefore not

* This phrase has been introduced earlier in the article to distinguish terms being used to refer to whatever the present user would use them to refer to and their being used to refer to whatever somebody else would use them to refer to (other-use.)

substitutable for) 'the 36th president of the United States', in any context.

"Note, that deviant referential uses of terms can result from the misapplication of standard criteria as well as from the correct application of deviant criteria of reference. The use of 'Nixon' to name Chairman Mao exemplifies the latter case. To illustrate the former, let us take the case of Mrs. Jones who mistaking her husband for a burglar, shot him to death. Her lawyer would certainly contend that Mr. Jones was killed because

(10) Mrs. Jones believed that Mr. Jones was a burglar.

Yet (in another sense) Mrs. Jones never believed that her husband, Mr. Jones was a burglar....."

Zemach is looking in the right place. But the way that he states the distinction between proper-use and other-use is not adequate. For, in either case, the term may not refer at all. And certainly, it would be odd to say that "Zeus" in "The Greeks believed that Zeus controlled the lightning," was being used to refer to anything, even to what the Greeks would use it to refer to. But this is not a serious defect. More serious is the oddity of saying that "Mr. Jones" is homonymous. The comparison with the case of "Nixon" as used in English and in Tibetan dialect is very weak. Both the lawyer and Mrs. Jones agree as to the correct reference of "Mr. Jones". For a supporter of James Stuart, the Young Pretender in 1745, "the king" refers to one person. For a supporter of George, "the king" refers to a different person. But surely both are speaking the same language or dialect, namely English - or at least they are not speaking different ones.

Now, Zemach may be committed also to the view that strictly, we should stick to the believer's use of the relevant words. At least that is the only way to make sense of his resolution of Quine's example.

"Quine's argument is, however, fallacious, and the fallacy lies in the same confusion of proper-use with other-use. 'Tom believes that dp = 1' does not say anything at all about Tom's way of referring to the number

which we have referred to by 'dp' and concerning which Tom believes that it is equal to 1. Hence it is incorrect to say that Tom believes that p. As far as we know, 'dp' and 'p' may not even be in his active vocabulary at all."

But it is not obviously incorrect at all. It is only incorrect to fail to draw the distinction between proper-use and other-use. We are permitted, it would seem, to proper-use the relevant terms; and then it is correct to say "Tom believes that p". It is only incorrect to do so if the terms are being other-used. Zemach has permitted proper-use of terms in giving the two examples about Mrs. Jones and her lawyer.

So, if this is to be a resolution at all, Zemach must be committed to the view that proper-use is not quite proper, logically speaking.

This does not accord well with our practice. There is nothing wrong in saying that Oedipus wanted to marry his mother, provided the audience knows the story. It is not false. It would be misleading if the audience did not know the story - hence the proviso. But it would also be misleading to say (to any audience) just that "Oedipus wanted to marry Jocasta," (who is Jocasta?) or "Oedipus wanted to marry the former king's wife." It would be misleading because it would fail to describe or take account of a crucially important fact about Oedipus' situation. In fact, there is no substitute here for a proper explanation of Oedipus' situation. Without it, any statement about what Oedipus wanted is misleading; with it, no statement is.

Again, take Quine's example, "Tom believes that Cicero denounced Catiline." On p. 141 ff in "Word and Object" he discusses puzzles of the familiar kind deriving from the fact that Cicero may be known as "Tully." Suppose that it is important to know what Tom's beliefs about Cicero are. Say a decision about his examination results

hangs on it. If the examiners were old-fashioned, or came from another country with different conventions, and knew Cicero as Tully, then it would be appropriate to say to them that Tom believed that Tully denounced Catiline. It would be appropriate even if Tom would deny it, because he did not know about the alternative name for Cicero and used "Tully" to refer to someone else. If we refuse to substitute here, we would mislead the examiners and allow an unfair result. Linsky says in chapter 7 of "Referring":-

"In oratio obliqua I am not responsible for reproducing the very words in which a person expresses his propositional attitude. That, one might say, is the whole reason for the existence of this mode of speech. That is what distinguishes it from the oratio recta mode. Of the extreme utility of the oratio obliqua form there cannot be any doubt. Imagine the burden which we would take upon ourselves in reporting what others say or want or know if in doing so we were not allowed to deviate from the very words they used in saying what they said or expressing what they want or know."

"What the indirect forms allow us to do is to convey the content without reproducing the words. How far are we allowed to stray from the actual words spoken? There is, of course, no fixed line over which one must not pass without falling into falsity. The governing rule here is that one must not mislead one's audience. Whether or not one's words are misleading or false depends upon complex features of the setting in which one speaks, including principally what one knows or believes that one's audience knows or believes. It is absurd to suggest that in reporting another's words in indirect discourse any deviation renders my account false. For the conventions governing the use of this mode of speech are not such that my audience will take me not to be deviating from the actual words I am reporting in oratio obliqua construction. In general the dichotomy, true or false, seems less in place here than the dichotomy fair/unfair or accurate/inaccurate. What one wants is a fair or accurate account of what someone said or knows or wants. The reporter's obligation is not to mislead in his deviations; it is not to deviate."

We can make a stronger claim. Deviation may

not just be permitted. It may be required in order not to mislead, as in the examples of Oedipus or my version of the story about Tom.

It would be tidier if we could either permit free substitution or ban it completely. But either way out frustrates the *oratio obliqua* mode and makes it useless. Whether substitution is free or banned, we may arouse false expectations about the believer in our audience. Suppose that Ralph believes that the grey-haired man on the platform is the mayor and that the man in the brown hat (whom he has seen on the beach) is a spy. But he does not know that they are one and the same man. Depending on other circumstances, it might mislead the audience to report either that he believes that the mayor is a spy or that he believes that the mayor is not a spy, or that he does not believe that the mayor is a spy.

Linsky does not go far enough in another respect. He allows that *oratio obliqua* is useful, but seems to think of it as a kind of shorthand; it would be burdensome not to deviate, but not, it seems impossible. But my arguments against Geach earlier bring out the point that *oratio obliqua* does not merely report actual or potential utterances. The sentences that occur in *oratio obliqua* are not merely being mentioned *qua* pieces of language, as they are in *oratio recta*. They are being used, although not in the ordinary descriptive straightforward way. They are being used to give the reasons and conclusions etc. of the subject. What is being reported is not just a bit of actual or potential language, but something that has an actual or potential use or role for the subject. What is being reported is the actual or potential reasons and conclusions of the subject. And this is what gives meaning to the notion of the 'content' in discourse.

There is also the "second, intersecting ambiguity" to be considered. There is an important difference between

(1) Ralph believes that someone is a spy,

and (2) Someone is such that Tom believes that he is a spy.

Both constructions are necessary to our language. The difference is clearly important. In (2) the speaker is committed to there being some individual who is suspected. There must be someone that both Ralph and we could identify as the putative spy. (1) commits the speaker to much less. It implies that Ralph does not have any particular individual in mind. In fact, as Quine points out again, most of us would probably agree with Ralph, at any time. (1) could be true even if there were no spy.

Suppose we now consider

(a) $(\exists x)$ (x wears a brown hat & Ralph believes that x is a spy)

(b) $(\exists x)$ (Ralph believes that (x wears a brown hat & x is a spy)

(c) Ralph believes that $(\exists x)$ (x wears a brown hat & x is a spy)

Any of these could represent "Ralph believes that the man in the brown hat is a spy." But there are important differences between them. (a) gives an identification which speaker and hearer are expected to understand, but not necessarily Ralph. (c) is compatible with there being no brown-hatted man and no spy. It gives Ralph's way of identifying the man - if there is one. (b) is different again. (b) commits the speaker to the existence of some individual who is under suspicion and gives an identification of him that Ralph has. It is not necessarily one that speaker and/or hearer will use.

The different positions of the quantifier here allow for the complexities of the situation in which Ralph, the speaker and the hearer are all involved. To reject any variant is to ignore these complexities.

It may seem that my account of belief commits me to a different view of this problem. If I were right, then surely free substitution should be possible. Belief is a way of identifying those things that have a certain status for the subject - namely that of being

true, and so of being actual or potential reasons for him doing or thinking certain things. But sentences are not reasons; they give the reasons. It is difficult to see why the sentence "There is no God" or even the uttering of it, should be a reason for God punishing anyone. Or why the sentence "There is a draught" should be a reason for shutting the door. Surely the reason for shutting the door is the fact that there is a draught; and the reason for punishment is the wickedness and impiety exemplified not merely by uttering the sentence, but by believing it, acting on it. But if it is the draught or the impiety that is the reason, then surely substitution should be possible. If the reason for arresting Bernard J. Ortcutt is that the man in the brown hat is a spy, and he is the man in the brown hat,then "the grey-haired man is a spy" will follow, if he is the grey haired man, and it must be the same reason for arresting Bernard J. Ortcutt. Clearly it is not a different one.

We immediately run up against the central problem about thought. We cannot say that 'things-in-the-world' are reasons. What would my reason be when I have made a mistake? My answer is to say that when I have got it wrong, there is nothing that is my reason. And it is the point of having "believes" in our language that with it we can make sense of people's mistakes; without it we cannot. Edgeley's answer to the question "What are the items between which the relation of 'being a reason for' holds?" was that it held between a fact on one hand and a belief or an action (basically) on the other. But I showed there that this could not be sustained.

My account of belief gives "believes" a crucial role in making sense of the situation when someone has made a mistake. If Bernard J. Ortcutt is not a spy, there is no reason for arresting him. So if Ralph arrests him, and he is not a spy, there was no reason for arresting him; and consequently, Ralph could not have had one. "Believes"

allows us to make sense of Ralph's arresting him. And we can then say that Ralph did have a reason, though in a different sense of "reason." This sense is an extension of what must be the primary case, where Ralph does have a reason, because Bernard is really a spy. But the extension involves giving up the status of being a relation for "reason for ...". We now have to say that "being a reason for ..." is a 'would-be' relation. This may seem strange, but then the situation is strange.

Certainly Leibniz' law seems to be right in straightforward descriptive contexts. If "a" and "b" are thought to refer to the same object, and it is found that to substitute one term for the other changes the truth-value of the relevant sentences, we have strong grounds for saying that they refer to different objects. But <u>oratio obliqua</u> contexts are not straightforward descriptive contexts. The sentences within <u>oratio obliqua</u> are not being used to describe anything. Or rather, insofar as the speaker accepts what is within <u>oratio obliqua</u> he can indicate that this is so; sometimes he must do so. But the use of the relevant sentences is to give someone else's 'reasons'. So we should not expect exactly the same rules and laws of substitution to apply. "The man in the brown hat" and "The grey-haired man" and "Bernard J. Ortcutt" may be freely interchanged when <u>we</u> are describing him. But they have, or may have, different implications for action and for thought even if they do refer to the same man. So when we are giving reasons for somebody's doing something, we cannot expect to be able to substitute in the same way as when we are describing something.

In the context of giving descriptions and determining truth-values, we can say that it does not matter whether the man is referred to as "the man in the brown hat" or "the grey-haired man" or "Bernard J. Ortcutt." We may pick our reference freely, although practical considerations make it important that we should pick a means

of identifying him that will identify him for our audience. But when we are giving someone else's reasons for doing something, we are subject to an extra complication in picking an appropriate way of referring. But we are then involved in a different language-game or practice.

11. The logic of belief

This problem of substitution is one of the problems that has been discussed under the heading "logic of belief." Some philosophers have attempted to construct a formal logic which includes an operator, or more usually two operators, the rules for whose use are intended to represent the words "believe" and "know". I shall not discuss here the view of philosophy that underlies such a programme. But it seems possible to mount a simple and brutal argument against any such attempt.

It seems clear that any such attempt must assume that human beings think rationally, that is, that they always accept the logical consequences of any particular belief. For example, Hintikka in "Knowledge and Belief" says (pp 30/31):-

".. it is clearly inadmissible to infer 'he knows that q' from 'he knows that p' solely on the basis of the fact that q follows logically from p, for the person in question may fail to see that p entails q, particularly if p and q are relatively complicated statements. The state of his knowledge might be comparable with that of a man who knows the axioms of some sophisticated mathematical theory but who does not know some distant consequences of the axioms. Nobody would criticize him for inconsistency.

"Hence there need not be anything nonsensical, irrational, or dishonest about a set of sentences which I have called inconsistent even when they are uttered by one and the same person on one and the same occasion. They are not inconsistent in any psychological or quasi-psychological sense of the word. They may even be true simultaneously. This does not go to show that our rules are incorrect, however. What it shows is that the notion which they define is unlike inconsistency in the current senses of the word and should be carefully distinguished from it. It shows, in short, that our terminology is inappropriate.

"..... What my notion of consistency amounts to in typical cases is immunity to certain kinds of criticism. In order to see this, suppose that a man says to you, 'I know that p but I don't know whether q' and suppose that p can be shown to entail logically q by means of some argument which he would be willing to accept. Then you can point out to him

that what he says he does not know is already implicit in what he claims he knows. If your argument is valid, it is irrational for our man to persist in saying that he does not know whether q is the case."

But people are not rational; or at least not always rational. Certainly they cannot follow the consequences of what they know very far. We might conclude brutally that belief certainly cannot have a 'logic' and perhaps knowledge cannot either. Certainly an enterprise such as Hintikka's cannot tell us anything about the real world.

But it is not as simple as that. Hintikka says (p.34):-

"It is also seen at once, however, that our results will not be completely unrealistic, that they are to some extent applicable to what people actively know. Or rather, the virtual implications we are studying are to some extent parallelled by strong pragmatical implications. There are no logical reasons why somebody who knows that p should know that q even when q's following from p is perfectly obvious. But such cases are likely to be exceptions If the consequence is quite obvious, we might even be reluctant to say that he does not know that q, although he denies it himself, on being asked, that he knows it; we might be tempted to say instead that he did not understand the question, that he was confused ('caught off guard') - that he 'really' knows, or even that he must know."

I think that we can go rather further than Hintikka here. Understanding or grasping some of the implications of a particular belief is a criterion of saying that someone has that belief at all. Someone who drew none of the obvious conclusions and accepted only bizarre implications of something that he claims to believe would give rise to serious questions about just what it was that he did believe. Nor is this restricted to logical implications and consequences. The question, just where and how we are to separate the consequences that someone must see if he is to count as believing that p and those that he may not see, is an interesting and important one. I suspect that it

does not have any general answers. But in any case, answers to this question would not illuminate the notion of belief, but rather the concepts involved in having the belief. That is, this problem is really the same as the various problems about meaning and understanding.

Incidentally, this point is strongly reminiscent of a point that Edgeley makes (on pg. 78 of "Reason in Theory and Practice") in defending the idea that some logical relations are non-substantive - do not have substantive and normative implications as most do.

But this point cannot do more than modify the brutal argument. It does not dispose of it. The real objection to it is that it is founded on a misunderstanding of the enterprise. Hintikka draws an instructive parallel (p. 38).

"The applicability of our results may thus be said to presuppose a certain amount of rationality in the people whose attitudes are being discussed. In this respect, our logical theory is comparable with certain other theories (e.g. the theory of games) which may also be said to depend on an assumption of rationality."

The theory of games does not describe people's actual playing of games. But it is extremely useful to those who play games. For it can be applied to games to show what the players should do, or what they can do. (There are various restrictions and assumptions, but they do not vitiate the point.) Attempts to formulate a "logic" of belief and/or knowledge must be seen in a similar light. The point of the enterprise lies in providing rules and criteria that can be applied by someone who wishes, in Hintikka's phrase, to be "immune from certain kinds of criticism."

How would this enterprise differ from "straight" logic? Surely what I have just said is one good way of describing the point of ordinary propositional or predicate logic? There is no real difference. But there are, perhaps, some special problems which can only be expressed with the aid of the notions of belief and of knowledge; so long as these

problems arise from the possibility of mistakes, whether of omission and of commission, such a logic could not conflict with my account of belief.

Some confirmation that my view of this enterprise is right, at least in Hintikka's view, comes on p. 39 of "Knowledge and Belief".

"One of the chief tasks of my essay is to formulate, to explain and to defend certain criteria of logical consistency (my 'defensibility') in terms of which criteria of logical consequence (my 'virtual implication') may be defined."

Further confirmation comes from looking at some of the problems that are discussed under this heading. For example, there is the Lottery Paradox. A discussion of this can be found in "Belief and Knowledge" by Robert J. Ackermann. Suppose a lottery is to be held; three slips of paper marked 1, 2, and 3, are placed in a hat; one is to be drawn out of it. The probability that the slip marked 1 will be drawn is 1/3. The probability of S1 is 1/3. So it is rational to believe (it says here) that the slip marked 1 will not be drawn, (i.e. - S1). Similarly for (-S2) and (-S3). So we can conclude (it says here) that (-S1 & -S2 & -S3). But we already know that (S1 or S2 or S3), which contradicts it. Again, (S1 or S2 or S3) has a probability of 1, since one of the slips will be drawn. Each of -S1, -S2, -S3 has a probability greater than 0.5, (since the probability of each of S1, S2, S3 is 1/3). So the probability of (-S1 & -S2 & -S3) is greater than 0.5. But that is incompatible with the fact that (S1 or S2 or S3) has a probability value greater than 0.5 (i.e. 1).

I have registered the assumptions noted by Ackermann by an expression of scepticism. The only other assumption is that numerical probability values can be attached to the statements; and that seems reasonable for this case. Whatever the resolution, we will learn from it about rationality and/or about probability. We do not really need the concept of belief at all, even though Ackermann states the problem in terms

of the beliefs that one may have about the lottery.

On p. 25 of his book he ends a passage in which he develops a criterion for saying when someone's beliefs are consistent by remarking that "our" intuitive motivation is that a's beliefs are consistent only if they could all be true. Quite. Consistency of belief is consistency in its standard and straightforward use. We cannot quite leave it at that, however. Standard tests of consistency cannot cater for agnosticism, for the case where someone does not believe that p, but may not believe that not-p either. Standard logic must have a truth-value for every statement. But surely a resolution of this will give a more sophisticated notion of consistency and teach us something about that, rather than about belief <u>per se</u>. In any case this problem does not invalidate my claim. For it arises from the possibility that people may get things wrong by omission as well as commission. If p and not-p are contradictories, not to believe either is to fail to believe, or to fail to accept, one true statement. And that is to get things wrong. And this applies even if the failure is excusable - as when "he could not have known" - or even justifiable - as when "the evidence that was available just was not good enough."

12. Speech acts.

A claim that has been made, and that still commands some support, is that "I know that p" and "I believe that p" are essentially speech-acts. That is, they are to be compared to "I promise that p," or "I warn you that p." The crucial point of this account is that it means denying that sentences (or statements) beginning "I believe" and "I know" are either true or false, and so are not descriptions of anything, and that it means asserting that the "first-person" use of these words is primary to them. Certainly these claims do seem to apply to "I promise" and "I warn."

In my earlier discussion of Edgeley's account in chapter 6, I encountered the problem that it is not altogether clear what "descriptive" means; there are several rather different meaning that can be given to it. I argued that Edgeley needed a stronger sense of "descriptive" than just "capable of being true or false". I rejected the claim that belief was descriptive in a strong sense. But I accept that "believes" is descriptive in the weak sense that sentences or statements containing it are true or false. Although first-person uses are special, I do not think that they are so different that such uses are not true or false, or that they are logically primary. Consequently, I reject the speech-act analysis of "believes." Essentially, I agree with Jonathan Harrison's conclusion in "Knowing and Promising" (in Mind 1962) that this account was an example of over-enthusiastic application of a real and important discovery.

There are two versions of the speech-act analysis. One is Austin's. In "Other Minds" (Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, supplementary volume 1946) he says:

"When I say 'I know,' I give others my word: I give others my authority for saying that 'S is P.'

"When I have said only that I am sure and prove to have been mistaken, I am not liable to be rounded on by others in the same way as when I have said 'I know.' ...."

It may be a little unfair to attribute this theory to Austin without comment. He precedes his discussion with the remark that "the parallel between saying 'I know' and saying 'I promise' may be elaborated." He does so as his discussion of "If I know, I can't be wrong." This is only one quite short section of a long paper. He spends a great deal of time on an acute discussion of "I know ..." which does not seem to depend on this claim at all. Austin followed this idea up with due caution and perhaps would not wish to over-emphasize it, but only to use the parallel to explain why, if I know, I can't be wrong.

Urmson in "Parenthetical Verbs" (Mind 1962) was less cautious. His account fastens on sentences of the form "England are batting to-day, I believe," or "I regret that he will be late." The main verbs in these sentences are what he calls parenthetical verbs. Their function is to orient the hearer to treating the accompanying sentence or proposition in a certain light. Thus "I regret" orients the hearer to treating whatever it is as something unfortunate or regrettable. "I believe" and "I know" orient the hearer to treating whatever it is as more or less certain, more or less well-backed by evidence.

Jonathan Harrison discusses speech-act account sympathetically and fully in "Knowing and Promising" in Mind 1962. He concludes in Section V:-

"The upshot of this is that the suggestion that 'I know ....' is like 'I promise ...' is, at the very least, extremely misleading. I would not personally like to say that there was no resemblance between them, but it seems clear that the differences are more obvious and more important than the resemblances. One of the most important differences is that someone saying 'I promise ...' is thereby promising, whereas someone saying 'I know ..' is not thereby knowing, but simply claiming that he knows. Hence,

though the question whether he really has promised may turn on the question whether he has said 'I promise ...', and not on the question whether what he said when he said 'I promise ...' is a true statement about himself, the question whether he really knows does not turn on whether he has said 'I know ...', but on whether, having said 'I know ..' he has said something about himself which is true."

I think that this point is a good one; and in fact most of the arguments that he considers earlier turn on, or are related to, this difference. Austin did recognize it, and minimized its importance; but I don't think he succeeds.

Harrison says in Section IX:-

"Someone who says 'I give you my word that it isn't loaded', 'I guarantee it isn't loaded', 'I swear it isn't loaded', can properly be described as having given his word that it was not loaded, but someone who simply says 'I know it isn't loaded' cannot. He is doing, what the others are certainly not doing, stating a fact about himself. The effect of his stating this fact may be the same as the effect of his saying 'I swear the gun is not loaded'; someone does, or does not, pull the trigger, depending upon what it is they wish to achieve. ..... 'I know the gun is loaded' entails 'The gun is loaded' which may be what his hearer wants to know. But perhaps he already knows this, and wants to know whether the speaker knows this too. In this latter event, 'I swear the gun is loaded' would not do for giving Y the information he needs."

Saying "I know ..." or "I believe .." may have the "speech-effects" that Austin and Urmson identify. But that is not enough to back any strong version of a speech-act account. Someone who makes a straightforward statement may be doing these things as well. (Consider, in the context of the quotation from Harrison's article, "The gun is not loaded.")

There is one kind of objection to the speech-act account that cannot be sustained. This is essentially that the account cannot be applied to second and third person uses of "know" and "believe"; or at the least that it needs to be substantially modified. This would mean

that the accounts would have to be very different between second or third person uses and first person uses. It is true that in the cases of promising and warning there are big differences as well. But, to take one natural account, if "Jones does not know that she will be late" (uttered by Smith) is true - or false - , it will not be incompatible with "I know she will be late" uttered by Jones. And that would be a powerful objection.

But there is a less paradoxical way, and one that leads to a position very like mine. This is to say that "know" and "believe" indicate the attitude, or give or withold the authority of both the subject and the speaker to whatever is said to be known or believed. This was argued by B. Harrison in Philosophical Quarterly 1963. He considers the following example. Jones believes that he has cancer. Smith knows this, but does not believe it to be true. But Smith could not say "Jones knows that he has cancer;" he must say "Jones believes that he has cancer" unless he wants to mislead his audience. Robinson knows about Jones' belief/knowledge, and does believe it to be true. He would say "Jones knows that he has cancer." If he were to say "Jones believes that he has cancer," he would be refraining from expressing his own view. Since this might lead to his hearers to take it that he does not have one, he might lay himself open to blame or criticism, unless his reasons for doing so were good ones. (There are other cases and Harrison does consider them.)

But this is not enough to support any full-blooded version of a speech-act account. Even if my choosing "Jones knows ...." instead of "Jones believes ..." indicates my beliefs or knowledge rather than anything about Jones, this is not enough to justify saying that "know" and "believe" are simply speech-act words. For I am making a claim about Jones as well as (implicitly) indicating my opinion about what he knows and/or believes.

"I know ..." and "I believe ..." are special,

however. My account does allow for this. My explanation is given for a situation when speaker and subject are different people; when speaker and subject are the same person, we get a special case. In a sense "I know ..." in "I know that p," and "I believe .." in "I believe that p" are superfluous and pointless. Normally, simply asserting that p indicates that I know or believe that p. But they do have a point of a kind. For we can and do use these words to give special force - but not always the same force - to the assertion "p". The fact that, in second or third person uses, "believes" does not commit the speaker, can be used in the first person to indicate some degree of uncertainty about "p". The fact that "knows" does commit the speaker can be used to give special importance or emphasis to the claim that p.

"I know" does not necessarily imply special certainty. Suppose I am assembling an engine, in particular the cylinder head. I put the valves in without grinding them in. Someone points out to me that the valves will not seal properly unless they are ground in. I may reply "I know that, but I want to check that they fit before I grind them in." Here I am using another facet of the second or third person use to emphasize that the relevant fact is available to me. And, of course, it has been pointed out often enough that "believes" does not imply any uncertainty in the believer's mind. I am not relying on that claim in explaining the first person use. I am relying on the fact that "He believes ..." does not commit the speaker. It is in virtue of that that we can use "I believe ..." to indicate our own uncertainty.

Not that "I believe ..." need always imply uncertainty. For example I may say that "I believe that the defendant was present at the scene, but I do not believe that he murdered the victim." In this case, I am drawing a contrast.

But still, one could plausibly claim that this

sentence could only have a use in special circumstances, where some issues were still in doubt. One might say it before the trial, or in the context of rejecting the findings of the court. It would be odd to say this where there was no (reasonable) question but that he was present but didn't do it. So in a way "believes" here does indicate uncertainty about the matter. The uncertainty need not be in the believer's mind, nor in the mind of the members of the court; it may stem simply from the fact there is disagreement.

It seems worth mentioning one other point here. It may be objected that my account is deficient in an important respect. Simply believing that p and p's being true are not enough to justify saying "Jones knows that p". He may have got it right, but he may have simply guessed. And we could not then say that he knew. I am not convinced that he then believes it either. But that only pushes the problem back a stage. We need something more about Jones, such as that he is in a position to know, that he has the relevant skills for finding out, that he has appropriate evidence and so on. Saying that Jones knows implies more than just that he has got it right. And it is this difference that is crucial for the theory of knowledge.

It may be objected. But I do not see this as fundamental. Any such difference can be included in my account without altering its essential structure.

Conclusion

The best way to conclude this thesis is to offer a summary or brief explanation giving its conclusions. It is not possible to state a view or doctrine or thesis that has been put forward and defended. Part of the reason for this is explained in the introduction. The role of a word or concept in the language can be shown or explained. We can show what could not be said if we did not have it, and explain what conceptual needs it satisfies. A corollary of the idea that the meaning of a word is the use to which it is put is that we cannot expect to get far by offering paraphrases or definitions.

The first part of the thesis is the simplest. Here the role of belief in explaining actions and the pressures that make it necessary for us to have "believes" can be shown quite simply. But it is necessary to explain the context in which it plays this role at some length. The inadequacy of competing theories is that they do not allow a proper account of the way in which we talk about and explain actions. This is an important, even, central, use of "believes," so the deficiency is serious.

"He believes that...." allows us to identify the limitations and justifications that bear on the performing of a particular action. But it does so in such a way that it is conceptually possible to make mistakes about these limitations and justifications. The speaker is witholding a commitment which the believer has made. It is the notion of a mistake that makes the difference between acting on p or acting as if p were true and believing that p and consequently doing A. Someone who acts on p or as if p were true has not made a mistake if it turns out that p is not the case.

The connection between actions and mistakes is fundamental. Along with the notion of making a mistake goes the notion of getting something right. One important difference between actions and events is that actions succeed or fail. It is this that creates the need for a special form of explanation, which I outline in the schema of formal and material elements. It is this that creates the need for a way of saying that someone did A because p even when p is not the case. We need to be able to specify that p was the reason for something done without committing ourselves to the truth of p. Without the concept of belief, we could not talk about people's actions in the way that we do.

Failures of the kind that are catered for by the concept of belief are not the only kind that actions and people are heir to. Direct or basic actions are immune from this kind of failure. But they are liable to other kinds. And in Chapter 8 of Part I, I suggest that some other special situations may explain the role of "wants," in a parallel way.

It is possible to give a clear meaning to Ryle's suggestion that "thinking" and words like it are "adverbial." This may not be quite what Ryle had in mind when he made the suggestion. "Adverbial" verbs occupy a special place and play a special role in the hierarchy of descriptions of actions. Verbs that describe thinking explain what the limitations and justifications are that bear on an action, but also show what their status is, especially their status in relation to the notions of evidence, certainty and truth. (Other verbs, such as "hope," "fear," "regret" show what their status is in relation to our interests and feelings.)

Cases of thinking where no executive actions are being performed are rather different. Some, like cases of planning,

are related in fairly straightforward ways to executive actions. But cases of great philosophical interest are those like le Penseur and Euclid. They are not so simple. The kind of thinking they exemplify has been at the centre of traditional discussions of the topic. They are of special interest because of their connection with the concepts of knowledge and of truth.

It is natural to ask the philosophical question "What are the constituents of thinking?" There may be difficulties about it, but Ryle's attempt to answer it succeeds in at least some cases. Certainly the question does seem to demand an answer. But the vocabulary that is important, including "believes", is as yet unexplained. So it is important to see why the question does not have an answer for these cases.

Much of this vocabulary, especially "believe" and "entertain" and "accept" does not describe any constituents. It has the different role of explaining what may be called the content of thought and of speech. A central aspect of this role is the explaining of the status qua true or false of the relevant propositions. "Having the status of a truth" is mainly a matter of being a reason in thought or in action. This is essentially the same role as that outlined for "adverbial" cases of thinking, where an executive action is being performed.

Something of what this means emerges in the discussion of intentionality in chapter 10. When Leibniz' law is applied to language used for this purpose a difficult choice is forced on us. But to choose either way makes it impossible for us to do what we need to do with the language. The logical complications are an inevitable consequence of what we are doing.

The activities that we are interested in are

such that neither their objects nor the activities can be tied to "constituents." The candidates for the role of constituents are related to other activities and carry different criteria of identity. Thinking of this kind is a special field of activity orrather a collection of special fields of activity. As in the case of music, the activities, the objects and the criteria of success are all inter-related and interdependent. What ties together the special fields of activity that we are interested in here is the central importance of the notion of truth and consequently of a reason.

Each of chapters, 6, 7 and 8 is concerned to do two things. Each one meets an argument that "believes" designates or describes something, or that the role of "believes" is independent of the notions of truth, reason and argument. At the same time the way in which the concept of belief plays its part emerges more clearly in each of the areas being discussed. The possibility of mistakes and deficiencies is built in to the language at a very fundamental level. "Believes" is not something tacked on to the basic conceptual structure of language (chapter 8) or of thought (chapters 6 and 7.)

Chapters 9 to 12 of part II are less closely related to my main theme. I have already shown where chapter 10 fits in. Chapter 9 sketches a resolution of another traditbnal problem about belief. The crucial point emerges from the discussion of the notion of a reason. But it is also important to bear in mind the whole context of what is involved in thinking. Chapter 11 shows the limitations of the attempt to proceed by constructing formal systems that include the concept of belief. Chapter 12 discusses the competing "speech-act" account and shows that my account can cater for the special case of the first-person use of "believe."

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